bookboon.com

Networking

Simone Lemming Andersen

Download free books at
bookboon.com

Simone L. Andersen

Networking – a professional discipline

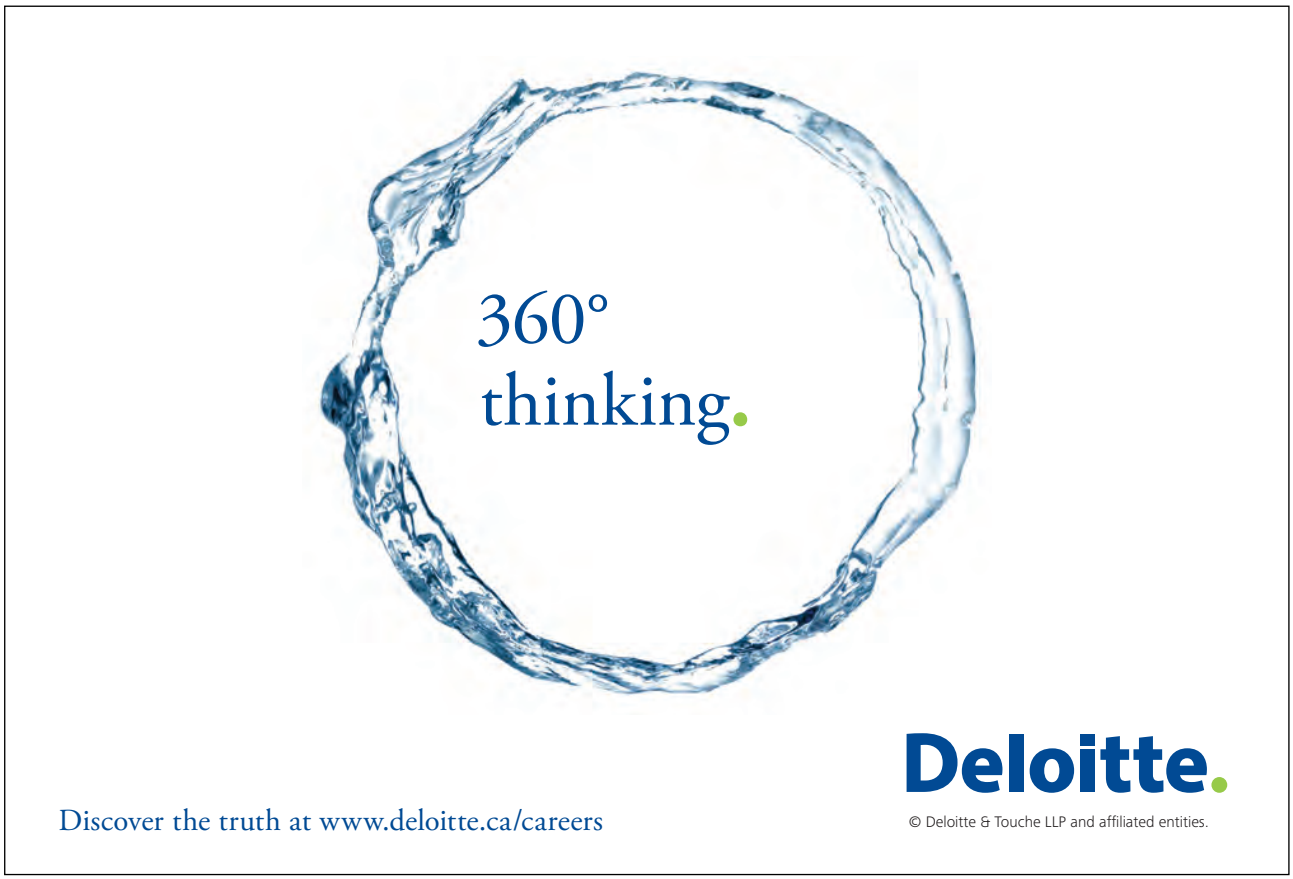
Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

Networking – a professional discipline
1st edition
© 2010 Simone L. Andersen & bookboon.com
ISBN 978-87-7681-671-1

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

Contents

	Simone L. Andersen	**8**
	Introduction	**9**
	The future belongs to those who can create networks	9
1	**It ought to be so easy**	**13**
2	**Does anyone know about you and your services?**	**14**
3	**Links to influence**	**15**
4	**Look for what you want**	**16**
5	**Netweaving**	**17**
6	**"Luck" links to networks**	**19**



Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

Click on the ad to read more

7	**What do we work with?**	**20**
7.1	Check the four parameters	22
8	**Create a good atmosphere**	**23**
8.1	How do you create a good atmosphere?	23
8.2	Create good atmosphere – but how?	24
8.3	Thyra Frank, lecturer and head of the Lotte care home in Copenhagen	24
8.4	Jason Watt, lecturer and racing driver	25
8.5	Oprah Winfrey, talk show host	25
8.6	Ole Henriksen, wellness guru	26
8.7	Southwest Airlines – also known as "The Love Airline"	27
8.8	The role models	27
9	**Body language and status**	**28**
9.1	Open and closed body language	29
10	**Status**	**32**
10.1	It's all about adaptability	32
10.2	Eye contact, smiles, and praise confer status	35
10.3	We empower those who can handle power	35

MSM
MAASTRICHT SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT
Increase your impact with MSM Executive Education
For almost 60 years Maastricht School of Management has been enhancing the management capacity of professionals and organizations around the world through state-of-the-art management education.
Our broad range of Open Enrollment Executive Programs offers you a unique interactive, stimulating and multicultural learning experience.
Be prepared for tomorrow's management challenges and apply today.
For more information, visit www.msm.nl or contact us at +31 43 38 70 808 or via admissions@msm.nl
the globally networked management school

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

Click on the ad to read more

10.4	Clothes	37
10.5	Being well-dressed confers status	38
10.6	Business cards also confer status	39
11	**Small talk**	**40**
11.1	The anatomy of small talk	40
11.2	Small talk – the beginning of a good relationship	41
11.3	Classic topics	43
11.4	Use open questions	44
11.5	Be in the know	44
11.6	Beware of parallel talk	44
11.7	People good at small talk are good listeners too	45
11.8	The worst mistakes a "small-talker" can make	46
11.9	The difficulty of making contact	46
11.10	How to deal with the problem	47
12	**Culture**	**49**
12.1	What is practice and what can we learn?	50
12.2	Group formation	50
12.3	From minus to plus	52

See the light!
The sooner you realize we are right, the sooner your life will get better!

A bit over the top? Yes we know!

We are just that sure that we can make your media activities more effective.

Get "Bookboon's Free Media Advice"
Email kbm@bookboon.com

bp CREDIT SUISSE DAIMLER Unilever Microsoft bookboon.com

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

Click on the ad to read more

12.4	Set goals for your staff	52
12.5	Make introductions	53
12.6	Remember to circulate	55
12.7	Someone who knows the art	56
12.8	Create a good atmosphere!	57
12. 9	Where is the curiosity?	58
12.10	Find role models	58
13	**Ten good pieces of advice**	**60**
14	**The road to success**	**62**
15	**Exercises**	**63**
16	**Epilogue**	**65**
17	**Endnotes**	**66**

I WANT TO CHANGE DIRECTION,
AND THE WORLD.
GOT-THE-ENERGY-TO-LEAD.COM
We believe that energy suppliers should be renewable, too. We are therefore looking for enthusiastic new colleagues with plenty of ideas who want to join RWE in changing the world. Visit us online to find out what we are offering and how we are working together to ensure the energy of the future.
RWE
The energy to lead

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

Click on the ad to read more

Simone L. Andersen

Simone L. Andersen is a journalist, M. Phil., lecturer, and author. She is proprietor of the communication company Strategisk Kommunikation ApS and of the network BusinessGuiden ApS.

Simone Lemming Andersen specializes in communication and networking; she gives many talks and runs courses on these subjects.

For many years Simone worked for Danmarks Radio, where among other things she had her own TV talk show.

In 2001 she founded Strategisk Kommunikation ApS, a company working in PR, marketing, and training for presentations and the media.

In 2010 she co-founded the business network BusinessGuiden, a physical network which aims to inspire, challenge, and foster relationships for both business owners and employees.

Its customer portfolio includes companies such as Novo Nordisk, Microsoft, the insurance company Codan, Ernst & Young, and Ingeniørforeningen, an interest group for all Danish engineers.

In 2008 Simone published *Be a Successful Networker – Via Body Language, Small Talk, and Culture* (in Danish), a bestseller about successful networking.

For more information visit www.strategisk.dk and www.businessguiden.dk, or telephone +45 2616 1818.

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

Introduction

The future belongs to those who can create networks

Sound networking abilities are essential in a knowledge-based society. In consequence, people with broad and effective networks are usually both successful and in demand.

Futurologists tell us that in time to come, the route to success will be ever more dependent on wide and relevant networks – you will have problems if you just sit back and hope that everything will work out.

If you have a top business position, you will probably already be familiar with the need to have a well-established network available to both you and your company.

I have repeatedly seen cases where there were two candidates with equal qualifications for a top job, and the one with the broader and more relevant network got the job. Often an applicant will be asked about his network contacts early in the job interview. That is why it is desirable to find recruits who have already spent years fostering their networks.

If you have been doing this, you can achieve a professional competence in terms of your own goals and intended strategies faster and more fully. Consequently, ability at professional networking is often ranked as a higher priority than professional competence itself.

But it is not only in the higher reaches of business that networks and skilled networkers demonstrate their value.

Who needs networks?

Networks are here to stay, and will gradually become a larger and larger component of the working environment. Networking is a sought-after, desirable, and sustainable competence in our experience-oriented and knowledge-based society.

But –

- not many students think constructively about the importance of starting to build a network while they are still studying
- not many people looking for a job think of using the waiting time to establish a network
- few members of the working population, whether on a career track or not, see the possibility of a more attractive job, when good contacts and a solid network might lead the way to the job of their dreams

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

- not many entrepreneurs realize that a good idea or a good product cannot succeed by itself – it takes the right contacts and the right ambassadors to create business success
- few senior executives realize that their own staff could become active network ambassadors for their company and thereby create growth.

Almost all individuals and companies have unrealized networking potential which is just waiting to be activated.

- How do I get started?

Networking is no passing vogue – it is a lifestyle you adopt because you realize that effective and relevant networks equate to opportunities, influence, and a more interesting life.

- The process begins by appreciating all the benefits that come with a good and effective network.
- The next step is to adopt the tools which support a good networker. That means developing abilities such as monitoring your own demeanour, being a good communicator, being aware of your brand and message, and, to some extent, acting ability.
- To be a good networker means practising and broadening your experience throughout the rest of your life.

Networking on the physical and the virtual level

Besides physical networks where we meet face to face, there are also opportunities in the world of virtual networking – LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, blogs, and so forth.

Virtual networks have strengths when it comes to researching new contacts and setting up initial contacts, as well as being effective for keeping in touch.

But it is still face-to-face encounters that offer the solidest route to new, reliable contacts.

We monitor one another. We have to decode the DNA of this new person. Who are you, and what do you "smell" like?

In brief – we need to accept and respect each other, because this acceptance is the basis for creating a relationship and results-oriented, long-term contacts.

In this e-book I shall focus on physical networks, because physical contact is fundamental to the networker. Unfortunately, it gives many people a great deal of difficulty.

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

Many people feel uncomfortable

Contact with other people and networking is not a tradition that is embedded naturally in business culture. Many people think it is hard and challenging work, and that studying individuals they don't know goes a little beyond normal requirements.

Think of the displacement activities we engage in when we are attending a course, a conference, or a reception, or when we just walk into a room where we don't know the other participants or guests. The arrival, and the breaks which are obvious networking opportunities, offer a true picture of how hard it can be.

More and more people feel so uncomfortable in these situations that they deliberately use their mobile phone or visit the toilet, or hang around the buffet or the coffee machine. But that is not the smart thing to do.

You might be around people who could be ideal for your network, or who know someone who could be ideal. That is why it is all about using the time by being open and inquisitive.

Personally, I have become so fascinated by the benefits of networking that I have spent the last nine years intensively researching this discipline and working with it.

Through travelling and studies around the world, I have explored different networking cultures and looked at what works.

My aim has been to uncover the attitudes and methods used by the best networkers all over the world. What do they do that seems to work, and what can we learn from them?

In my experience, it is possible to spend a lot of time theorizing about networks – and this is very important, of course. But if you need to act and gain your share of the benefits of networking, then this needs to be about practice and specific tools.

In this book, you will be introduced to people who among other things have made giant leaps within their professions thanks to their powerful networks. Some examples are: Barack Obama, Bill Clinton, Angela Merkel, Oprah Winfrey, the Danish racing driver Jason Watt, former EU commissioner Mariann Fischer Boel, and the wellness guru Ole Henriksen.

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

I too have experienced the discomfort associated with entering an unfamiliar gathering. I know the feeling of wanting to disappear. But that is not how it is for me today. This is now, to me, an important and congenial aspect of business which I enjoy working with and exploring. That is probably because the tools have given me confidence and energy which almost always lead to rewarding new contacts, development, and (not least) business.

Read this book, which is filled with good advice and tools that will rapidly give you a professional-networking mind.

Once you have got started, and grasped the idea that making contacts and establishing networks is a type of practical and professional work like so much else, it will be fun and effective – and your confidence will grow.

Enjoy!

Simone L. Andersen
Journalist, M. Phil., author, and lecturer.
Strategisk Kommunikation ApS

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

1 It ought to be so easy

You know the situation when you are attending a course, a talk, or a conference, and the well-meaning organizers have intentionally scheduled time for networking? You don't know anyone, and you feel that any contact you might make would be an awkward and forced kind of contact – that is, if you manage to make contact with someone at all.

On these occasions, a lot of effort will be devoted to looking as if you are very busy and an important player in business life. We use our mobile phone, visit the bathroom, and head for the coffee machine, so that it does not become apparent that we cannot cope with the task of getting into contact with other guests in a constructive and natural way.

> To many people, making contact with strangers and initiating a natural conversation is a challenge on a par with survival training.

Studies show that what people fear most is calling attention to themselves in public.

Unfortunately, fear or anxiety about inadequacy is a taboo that we only rarely talk about. That is why it is so hard for us to face it and do something about it – not least in business life. Maybe because we feel that, as grown-up, well-educated people, we should be able to master it, so that it is humiliating to admit that we are having problems with such a simple thing as making contact. Later in this book I will talk about what causes this anxiety, and how we can work on it.

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

2 Does anyone know about you and your services?

Some years ago I became self-employed. After a long career with the Danish television channel Danmarks Radio, I did not know much about life as an entrepreneur or what it required. But I had an indomitable belief in the quality of the services I had to offer and in my survival skills as a human being.

I obtained career coaching, got help with a business plan, set myself up with an office, and, on the whole, I did what the career advisers told me to do. After a few months' preparation, I was ready to go.

In the demanding work of drafting business and development plans, and in my eagerness to get started, I had completely overlooked the fact that practically no one besides my immediate circle of acquaintances and former colleagues knew about my services and my new self-employed life. I had not thought of setting up relevant networks which could help me to function as ambassador for my new company.

After three months it was quite an awakening when I realized that my business accounts showed outgoings but as yet hardly any income.

I felt confused, because to begin with I couldn't work out how I should set about creating the networks I obviously needed.

Some years earlier, while I was studying in London, I had witnessed a very effective network culture. I was invited to various receptions, and I observed how so many Englishmen were mingling with one another and getting introduced.

With that in mind, I decided to go back to London to study English networking culture. This, and subsequent ongoing studies of networking all over the world, have led to a significant change in my way of thinking and developing business.

> It is important to have career coaching, expertise, and development opportunities within reach, just as it is important to have ambassadors who can enhance brand awareness for you, your products, and your services.

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

3 Links to influence

Personal relationships foster trust and fidelity. If you are buying a product where there are no significant differences in quality or price, you will naturally prefer to buy from the person you know. And even if there are significant differences, you will still want to buy from the person you know. Personal recommendations outweigh other considerations, when it comes to looking for a new job, marketing, or sales.

The fact is that if you need a lawyer, an engineering firm, a web firm, or a partner, you will naturally think of people you know and have a good chemistry with, or you will think of someone who has been recommended to you.

If you are looking for a job, it is much more worthwhile to spend your time seeking out relevant networks and networking, than to spend the time writing applications.

More than 60 per cent of all jobs are filled through networking and recommendations, so clearly it is pointless to expect to secure a job interview in the conventional way.

Think how often the same experts are repeatedly interviewed in the media. It is the same principle. A journalist turns to the people he already knows when he needs a comment on some news item, a story or an event.

That is why you need to include people with influence in your network, so that they can choose you when they need help in making a decision, developing projects, purchasing services, doing interviews, gathering advice, or the like.

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

4 Look for what you want

It is a good idea to ask yourself who you admire and who you associate with.

1. Is it people who possess what you want?
2. Or, is it people who want what you possess?

It makes a big difference whether you answered "yes" to the first or to the second question. If you answered yes to the second question – you have a problem.

Sociologically, human beings tend to seek out and be around people who are like ourselves or who have the same issues as we have.

Here we find sympathy and endorsement; but, as business people, we cannot live on that. We have to be around people who can inspire us, give good advice, help us progress, and so forth. Consequently, we also need to discover role models and observe their attitudes, manners, and mindset.

If you want to succeed with your business or make a career, then find people who have run profitable businesses or have made rapid career progress. Talk to them and learn about their money or their career. You may find that you are the only one who is self-conscious about these things.

Financially strong people and people with successful careers are used to talking about both money and career advancement, so that these are not taboo conversation topics for them. The fact that you are brave enough to ask about these things can sometimes lead the way to a valuable contact.

It can be quite instructive to hear how they handle ideas, money, and investments, when these are natural parts of their lives and not just a dream.

The beginning of a new mindset could be to read about people who have had fantastic careers or made huge fortunes.

I can recommend the multimillionaire Felix Dennis, and his book *How to Get Rich*; or Richard Branson. who makes a point of describing the mistakes he made before achieving his current status as a billionaire.

It is worth remembering: if you want to make a lot of money, then look for people who have already gone that route. If you want influence, then look for people at the centre of power. It might sound cynical, but real life shows that if you orient yourself towards the milieu that you want to be part of, your chances of becoming a part of it will improve – and you will have role models within reach.

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

5 Netweaving

Often we think about networking in terms of "What do I get in return?" What do I get in return for all my efforts in creating a network and putting time into it? But this is not the way you should look at networks. Experience shows that those who gain most from their networks think the other way round: "What can I contribute to my networks?"

You probably know the feeling when someone has helped you find a better job, a new partner, a new customer, or solved a technical problem you couldn't work out. You don't forget that kind of favour, and you will always be available and supportive to that person.

If you turn the question "What do I get in return?" round and change it to "How can I help you?", you have immediately created a different context, and your opposite number will be committed and positive in his attitude.

The American Bob Littell[1] has defined the technique of "NetWeaving", which focuses on seeing opportunities and making connections with people you meet in your networks.

Instead of asking what you can achieve by contacting a certain person, you can think about pursuing four opportunities:

- How can I help this person?
- Do I know someone in my network that might be able to give him or her a push forward?
- Could this person be beneficial to someone in my network?
- or: This person is very interesting – how can I integrate him into my network?

By turning your way of thinking towards networking and helping rather than receiving, you signal energy and social competence.

The technique is constructive in making long-term relationships, and it is very effective at network meetings or during breaks at conferences and the like. The process can be guided by a facilitator – thereby ensuring that you are all working on the basis of the same principles.

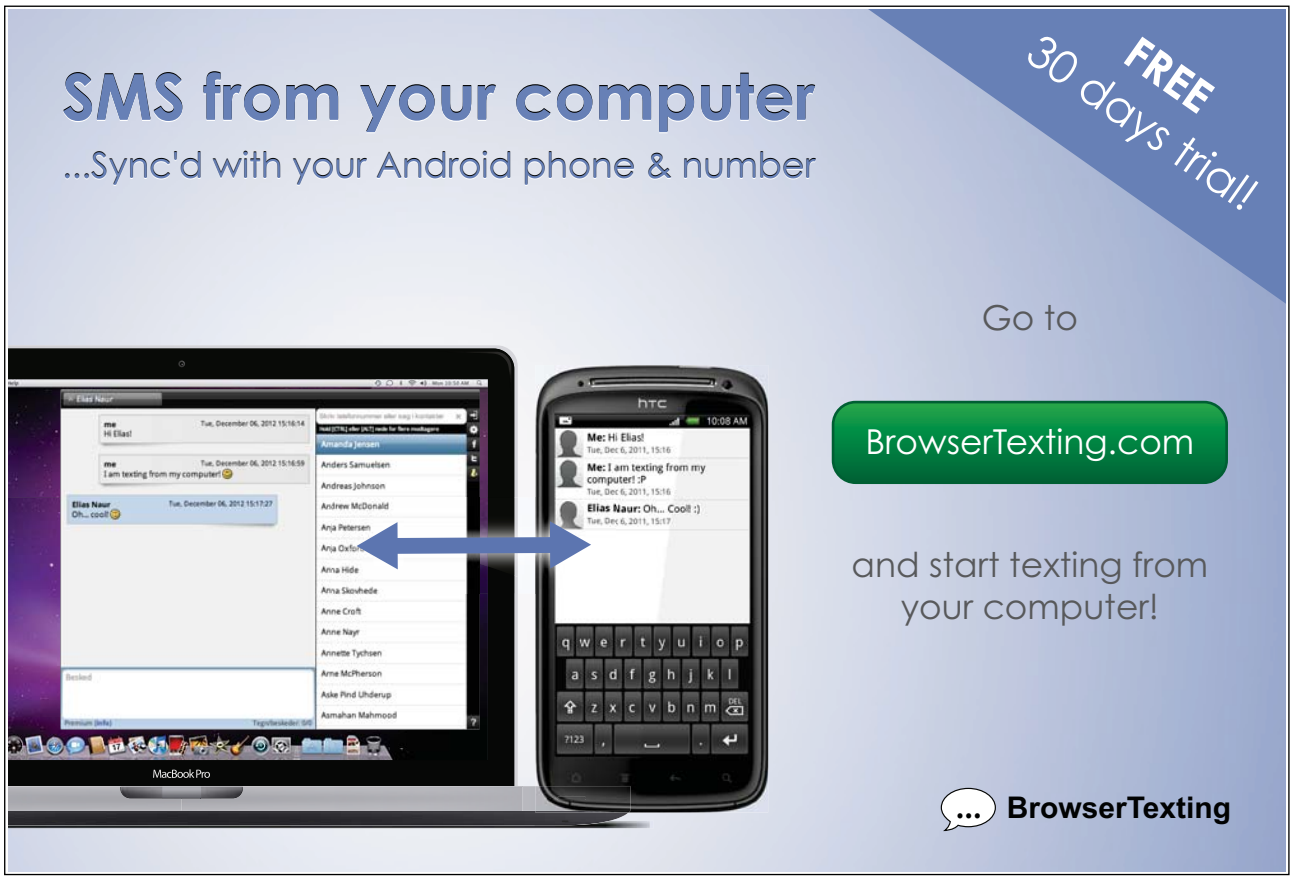
The switch from focusing on "me" to focusing on "you" almost always produces an unselfish attitude in your counterparts, and the unselfish attitude which tends to be the norm at conventional network meetings anyway will morph into enthusiasm and intensive intimacy.

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

A sceptical reader may object at this point that you can't be starry-eyed and offer your services to everyone, because you also need to make a living. That is a balance you have to strike.

My personal approach to this challenge is that I know how important it is to signal "good attitude" from the outset, because this sets me apart from the people who are keeping their knowledge and expertise to themselves. That is why advice, offering a free counselling session, a sample, or just being a good listener furthers your own interests as well as those of the other person.

Netweaving does not exclude conventional networking where you often prioritize receiving. The two techniques can well supplement each other. It is all about choosing the right balance in the context.



Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

Click on the ad to read more

6 "Luck" links to networks

The Luck Factor is a book by sociologist Dr Richard Wiseman. Its message is that people with broad networks feel far luckier in life. They get the right jobs, their relationships last longer, and, all things considered, they have a good and satisfactory life. People with narrow networks find life difficult and feel that things don't come easily to them.

It is easy to see how this is. The broader the network, the greater the likelihood that someone in the network can help when one day you are looking for a new job or a new client. If even lucky people have crises, statistically there will be more people who might help and guide you through the crisis. If you have a restricted network or perhaps no network at all, the opportunities for help are significantly reduced.

Another general point in Dr Wiseman's research is that when you feel satisfied or lucky in life, your outlook is then broader, and you will simply see more opportunities in life, which will strengthen your feeling of being a lucky person.

Among other things, Dr Wiseman carries out an experiment in which a person who defines himself as unlucky goes for a walk along a route where a dollar bill is lying on the ground. The "unlucky" person walks right past it without noticing it. Then a "lucky" person takes the same walk, and he notices the bill right away.

Dr Wiseman uses this and other experiments to demonstrate that people who feel lucky and who have broad networks are also able to spot more opportunities in life. They won't allow themselves to be constrained, but see opportunities wherever they are.

Richard Wiseman is a very active researcher and has written several books. His findings are highly specific and often have clear relevance to people who are interested in interaction and its significance in the public domain. Consequently it can be very rewarding to follow his blog (http://richardwiseman.worldpress.com).

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

7 What do we work with?

Thinking about informal conversation in the context of aiming to be an effective networker, several things come into play, including:

A. **Creating a good atmosphere**
B. **Our own attitude**
C. **Small talk**
D. **Culture**

A: Creating a good atmosphere. If we want to succeed, whether in our private lives or our careers, we are very much dependent on those around us accepting us and our projects.

There are people who succeed in almost everything they do. A distinctive characteristic of many of these people is their ability to create a good atmosphere in their interactions with others.

To create a good atmosphere is, above all, about causing other people to relax in your company. From there, the making of relationships begins.

Who is your target group?
And how can we reach them?
At Bookboon, you can segment the exact right audience for your advertising campaign.
Our eBooks offer in-book advertising spot to reach the right candidate.

Contact us to hear more
kbm@bookboon.com
bp CREDIT SUISSE DAIMLER Unilever Microsoft bookboon.com
Download free eBooks at bookboon.com
Click on the ad to read more

B: Our own attitude – nonverbal communication means more than we want to admit

When you meet a new person, he or she will unconsciously devote 90 per cent of attention to interpreting your body language and your tone of voice. Your words count for less than 10 per cent.

That is significant, because we often imagine that our words are very important when we introduce ourselves to new people.

(The finding is due to the social psychologist Albert Mehrabian. See chapter 9.)

In the worst case, the contents of our utterance may be wasted, because things that we do not control or have not practised in advance – namely our body language and tone of voice – get all the attention, so that the actual message is inaudible to the hearer.

It is not only when we first make contact with new people that our nonverbal communication speaks for itself. When we speak, even to someone we know, the words comprise than a third of the message, and the nonverbal body language comprises two thirds. The body is a tell-tale, and this is hard to control. You can relatively easy tell lies in words, but it is harder to make your body do the same thing persuasively.

C: Small talk is a concept recognized in American culture, which is scarcely taken seriously in some parts of Western Europe.

Small talk can be translated as "conversation without any essential contents", and it is often equated with "empty talk" or "talk about trivialities". Clearly, most people don't find it important to focus on this.

However, the strange thing is that small talk is a large part of our everyday life, and in practice we don't treat it as unimportant. Small talk is the approach to every conversation and interaction. The best version of small talk opens up relationships and contacts, and allows other people to feel comfortable in your company.

D: Culture. In some countries the attitude to strangers is very open in general – in other countries the attitude is more reserved. In addition to that there are individual differences between people. The differences often derive from religious and political traditions, and of course from personality.

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

Many people dislike making new contacts with others. They stick to the people they know, and only rarely break that pattern. This means that it can be extra difficult to find a new group of people to interact with, because you cannot count on automatically getting included in a group if you are on your own.

7.1 Check the four parameters

To be a successful and effective networker it is very important to assess yourself with respect to all four of the above parameters. Each of them is an important factor in your overall behaviour. Success rate and happiness will increase in step with your ability to handle the techniques and tools associated with the individual parameters, because they complement each other.

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

Click on the ad to read more

8 Create a good atmosphere

Have you ever thought about how you enter a room, for instance when attending a course, at a new job, in a conference, a meeting room, or somewhere else where you are unknown?

Not many people think about what atmosphere they create around themselves or in their surroundings.

Some might think about what to say, but most people don't get any further than that. On the whole, we put our energy into self-awareness, where it is mostly about how we personally will get through the meeting as well as possible.

We want to be professionally strong in our surroundings and give the impression that we are competent in our profession. The question is whether this is enough to create a good atmosphere, to lead others to want to get to know us, and for them to want to give us something in return when we are busy selling ourselves.

In 2008 a study by MarketWatch found that more than 85 per cent of what we succeed at results from the ability to create a good atmosphere.

What we tend to value highly is professional competence and expertise, yet this counts for only 15 per cent. This is not to say that we should assign professional competence less than 100 per cent value in future, but it means that while starting to create good new relationships with others we need to pay attention to prioritizing good atmosphere.

How do we create success?

It is estimated that

- 85 per cent is caused by being able to create a good atmosphere through one's expression
- Technical expertise counts for only 15 per cent.

8.1 How do you create a good atmosphere?

When we contact or talk to other people professionally or in networks, we often focus heavily on getting our own message heard.

For some years we have been told we should memorize an elevator speech,[2] and this can certainly be worthwhile – an elevator speech can clarify our own ideas about our aims for our business life or our company, and can thereby create focus. But giving an elevator speech or talking a lot about yourself and your services will not do that much towards creating a good atmosphere.

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

Try to think of an occasion where you felt comfortable in a one-to-one meeting. Were you with someone who was talking a lot about himself, who was selling, and who wasn't paying attention to what you said? Surely not. When we feel comfortable, it is often because someone is listening to us, someone who asks about what we have said, someone who is positive about us, someone who understands us the way we want to be understood.

Good atmosphere comes through accepting and understanding the person you are talking to, and not least through an attitude which lets him know that you understand him.

> The art is to make other people feel important and special.

8.2 Create good atmosphere – but how?

It is not simple to define what it takes to create a good atmosphere at a meeting with other people. But we are not in doubt when we meet other people who make us feel relaxed. That is why, below, I shall briefly describe some role models – people who individually are setting out to create their own good atmosphere.

8.3 Thyra Frank, lecturer and head of the Lotte care home in Copenhagen

Head of the Lotte care home, Thyra Frank has created a workplace in Denmark where the elderly love living and where the staff love working. Once one has met Thyra Frank, that becomes understandable. She is the best-established example of the fact that size and looks have nothing to do with whether or not you have the ability to create a good atmosphere, or whether or not you have impact.

When Thyra comes into the room or walks to the podium, most people will smile and the good mood quickly spreads. Thyra works with empathy and its converse, which comes out in her humorous account of life in a care home. Most of us know that we will be involved with that system one day, because a loved one or we ourselves will go there. So we are automatically on her side, and we see Thyra as a champion we ought to support.

Thyra Frank is a fantastic speaker, very vivacious in her facial expression, and she soon sets off infectious laughter, which is how she establishes her scenario rapidly and is someone you want to listen to.

One of Thyra's talks (in Danish) is online at http://arbejdsglaede.23video.com/video/479380/thyra-frank-p-arbejdsglde-live.

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

8.4 Jason Watt, lecturer and racing driver

My first meeting with the Danish racing driver Jason Watt was on the phone. The conversation lasted less than ten minutes, yet he lifted my mood several notches in that short time. We were talking about networking, and how important it is to be happy and relaxed in one's approach to people. Many years ago, Jason lost 80 per cent of his mobility because of a simple motor cycle crash. He can only use his arms and his head. And those, he knows how to use. It wasn't only me he infected with his high spirits. Later that night I met him at a talk and I saw how much intensity, love of life, and comprehensibility you can express with less than twenty per cent of your body. Jason uses his eyes, his smile, his huge love of life, and his laconic type of attitude to himself and his accident to make his fellow human beings feel very privileged.

Through humour and high spirits, he creates a good atmosphere among the audience, and he receives a lot of empathy and endorsement in return.

8.5 Oprah Winfrey, talk show host

As a talk show host, Oprah Winfrey has become world-famous, and she is one of America's wealthiest women. In her talk shows she discusses both serious and less serious topics. It is surprising how she can discuss such diverse topics in different countries with such a level of exposure without getting people's backs up.

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

Click on the ad to read more

The explanation probably is that she knows how to create a good atmosphere. She shows openness, empathy, intimacy, and, not least, she is a good listener. She knows how to demonstrate through her attitude that she is listening carefully. She praises, but she also shows her steel.

While she was staying in Denmark in connection with hosting the Olympics in 2016, an American reporter said: "Oprah has made her fortune by being a good listener". That is not wrong, yet at the same time she is a good example of the fact that being attentive to other people doesn't imply being nothing yourself. Quite the reverse – you get an incredible platform for your ideas and your earnings.

8.6 Ole Henriksen, wellness guru

Ole Henriksen is a Dane. Early in his adult life he left Denmark to create a professional career in America. He has been very successful in Hollywood, where he is personal wellness guru to the biggest stars.

It has been very exciting to watch this Danish-American beauty expert's arrival on the Danish television scene. Time after time he manages to feature on various nationwide media. How does he manage it?

A couple of years ago, Ole launched a new product: cosmetics based on red tea. In Denmark, Ole was interviewed on the Danish TV2 morning show, where he was due to talk about his new launch.

– He quickly turns the tables, and only talks about his products for less than thirty seconds. He talks about how wonderful the host looks, how beautiful her skin is, how wonderful it is to be in Denmark, and how beautiful, fantastic, and kind the Danes are. And what happens? A fantastic atmosphere emerges in the studio, and this comes across to the viewers. The host beams with joy, no critical questions, and everyone is happy – even though what has just happened is so not Danish.

Ole Henriksen simply creates a good atmosphere by drawing attention away from himself and his products towards the people he is with, which includes the viewers too.

He radiates success, energy, and empathy, and in this way creates a good atmosphere.

In record time, Ole Henriksen has made a name and created a brand image in Denmark. He has his own TV shows, where he steers both well-known and unknown Danes towards well-being and self-esteem. There is a high demand for seats at his talks in Denmark.

Not much money has been spent on advertising or marketing Ole Henriksen's products. They sell themselves through the man who makes everyone feel very relaxed in his company.

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

8.7 Southwest Airlines – also known as "The Love Airline"

Here, effort has been put into creating a good atmosphere within an environment that is normally highly standardized. The safety-instruction talk before take-off is accompanied by music and presented by a steward or stewardess. There is no doubt that the passengers are actually astonished.

Visit the link below and see how Southwest's staff are not only congenial and service minded, but are also taking the message about good atmosphere out into the cabin:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jy0Yf1CAsuQ&NR=1

8.8 The role models

The examples above work in their individual ways. These role models are only intended to inspire you, so that you can try to find what works for you and perhaps find your own style and attitude. But remember that when creating good atmosphere it is important to believe in yourself and to have the energy to listen and to be committed.

Do your employees receive the right training?
Bookboon offers an eLibrairy with a wide range of Soft Skill training & Microsoft Office books to keep your staff up to date at all times.
Contact us to hear more
kbm@bookboon.com
bp
CREDIT SUISSE
DAIMLER
Unilever
Microsoft
bookboon.com

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

Click on the ad to read more

9 Body language and status

They say it is good to be eloquent, but in reality it is better if you are able to control your physical expression. The reason is that you are being assessed and judged first on your body language, second on your voice – through accent, dialect, and your tone of voice – and on your words last of all.

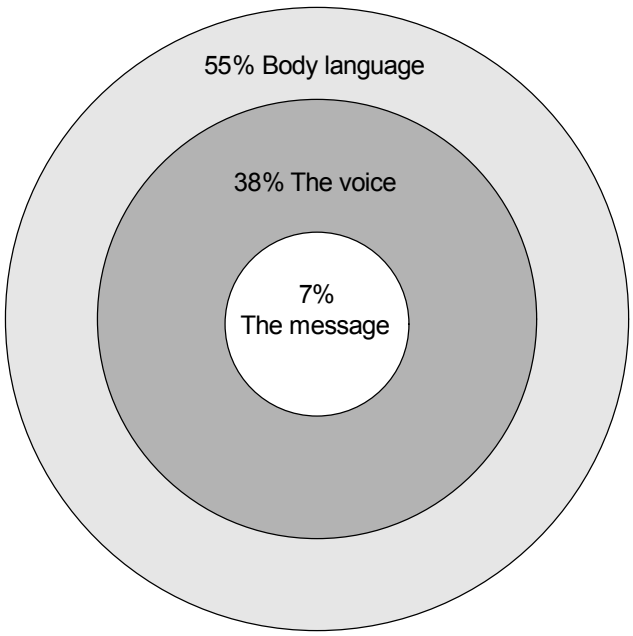
The fact is that we devote more than 90 per cent of our attention to interpreting one another in terms of body language and voice.[3] Only when we have done that, do we listen effectively to what the speaker says.

The body is the crux in human communication and interpretation, and our unconscious is constantly registering more than we suppose. Unfortunately, we often signal things without realizing it – signals that may create empathy or its converse. They often engender reactions that confuse us, because we don't know what has caused the reaction.

That is why it is all about harmony between facial expression, body, voice, and what we express in words. It is not about acting, but about finding oneself.

The figure below shows how the different elements relate to one another.

What do we observe?



Body language and voice account for more than 90 per cent of our attention when we meet new people.

That is why it matters how you handle your behaviour, your body language, and your attitude in public.

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

The more you understand yourself and your attitude, the greater opportunity you have to optimize your attractive, positive signals. If your body language is open and pleasant when you meet people, you increase your charisma and thereby the chance of a positive outcome.

If instead you are nervous or uncomfortable about stepping into a gathering where you don't know anyone, your natural posture will be closed, and you will hug the walls and make yourself invisible.

Your eyes wander or are lowered and withdrawn. In that way, you protect yourself and tell those around you "I don't feel comfortable in this situation".

In a way, this is the body's natural protective reaction, since the self doesn't like the situation and wants to protect itself.

To close up and protect oneself from the surroundings can in many situations be an appropriate reaction, but not when you are at a reception or are attending an important meeting, and ought to be radiating self-esteem and a desire to make contact with others. Those around you quickly read your posture and unconsciously work out that you are signalling low self-esteem.

Most people want success in their lives. That is why we don't seek out and are not attracted to people who might pull us down. We prefer to interact with people who have self-esteem and ambitions, or people who are role models for what we want to accomplish.

That is why people signalling low self-esteem have a big job on their hands, if they want to make contacts but cannot get their body to signal that message.

My experience, though, is that a lot can change – once we increase our awareness of posture mechanisms that speak for themselves.

9.1 Open and closed body language

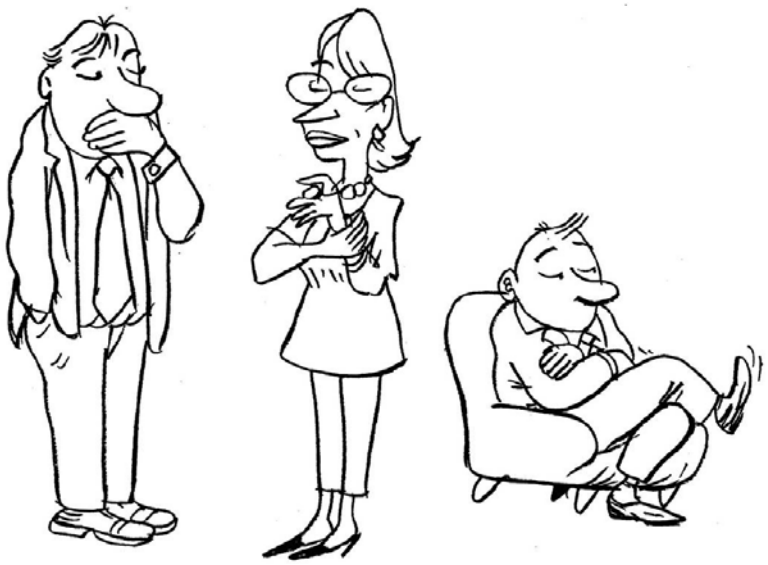
Try to observe your colleagues' posture at work. You will see that we have many different ways of walking, talking, and sitting. You will soon sense who is open for contact and who is signalling "Do not disturb" through his posture.

What do you do when you are busy? Probably, you lean forward a little, hold your arms close to your body, walk briskly and mechanically, and lower your eyes in an unfocused way.

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

These reactions signal that you don't want contact or involvement. Those around you will quickly infer that you don't want to be disturbed. In that way, we often use our bodies as a nonverbal speaking tube. Unconsciously, we read other people's posture and react to it – just as we also both consciously and unconsciously send signals.

Closed body language.



You need great energy if you want to contact people with a closed body language. (Drawing: Julius).

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

Click on the ad to read more

Open body language

There is not much courtesy in crossed arms and legs. On the other hand, there is courtesy in an open posture where a happy, direct look or smile signals a quite different attitude to contact. I can even feel myself wanting to hug people who achieve these postures, because they radiate harmony and enthusiasm for helping other people.

An open posture creates relaxation and trust in the partner.

Posture

We all know how it feels to have a bad day, when you have to force yourself to straighten up and look others in the eye. It feels more natural to shut the world out.

The first thing we observe when interpreting one another's body language is posture, so if you are going to signal energy, you have to stand up straight and push out your chest – otherwise you will soon be sussed.

A good example of a man whose posture signals energy is President Barack Obama. His past as a basketball player and his very controlled posture signal energy. Even in stressful situations, he is able to look consistent and open, with plenty of resources.

Former president Bill Clinton also managed to signal energy through his posture, while it was more difficult for George W. Bush, whose posture and attitude never worked positively for him.

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

10 Status

When we are thinking about the body and how we use it, I use the terms *high status* and *low status* to label the different ways of reacting and to explain what is going in a particular situation. In this context, "status" means confidence, attitude, and availability – or lack of availability.

Low status corresponds in the extreme to hugging the walls, looking at the floor, not taking up much space, and talking in a low voice if you have occasion to talk at all. Jerky and unco-ordinated movements can also be a sign of low status.

If you act with low status, you don't take up much space and often people may not even notice you. This type of person often has to be on his own, because not many people feel tempted, obliged, or welcome to make contact with a person who has a loser's attitude.

High status can at the extreme mean acting with a great deal of show and swagger. You take up plenty of space and you can clearly be heard and seen in the room – an attitude which is often seen as domineering and arrogant.

To some it is natural to be that way, and if they manage to maintain the pose, it can be very attractive. But it is demanding, and you have to keep it up. Otherwise, it will quickly look pathetic.

10.1 It's all about adaptability

It is not necessarily better to have high status than low status. Sometimes it can even be an advantage to adopt low-status attitudes.

If, for instance, you are talking to a person radiating low status, it can be worthwhile to underbid him with even lower status. In that way, you grant that person status, so that he starts feeling worth something, and in that way you might be able to have a constructive conversation.

The ideal so far as the status concept is concerned lies in being adaptable with respect to your status.

We are rarely in a pure high- or low-status situation. Most of us shift between the status extremes, depending on the situation.

Many years of work with the status concept has shown me that we do not always adopt the most appropriate level in a given situation. If, for instance, you are finding it problematic to make contact with people you don't know, awareness of your own and other people's behaviour patterns can be very beneficial.

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

- If you repeatedly find yourself adopting the low-status position when you get into a new situation, it might be a good idea to study high-status people and adopt some of their attitudes.
- If you need to assume a higher status, e.g. when you have to network in a new environment, easy and focused movements can convey confidence and energy.
- Being able to create intimacy will increase your charisma and your status, and thereby will lead other people to want to be around you.
- If you have colleagues who are always arguing or disagreeing, this might be caused by their struggle over status, so that they are constantly trying to outbid one another.
- To resolve that type of conflict, the parties need to be made aware that they may be arguing not about any concrete points, but about their respective status.

Understanding of status and experience with it can be the route to good relationships with many different kinds of people.

It is also important to practise the ability to adapt your status, so that you can quickly suit your own body language to your conversational partner and the situation.

Precise and effective communication will occur when both parties have reasonably similar status levels.

This is a very interesting field to engage in, because astonishingly beneficial results often arise when you increase your awareness of how you deal with your own status when meeting others.

Is your recruitment website still missing a piece?

Bookboon can optimize your current traffic. By offering our free eBooks in your look and feel, we build a qualitative database of potential candidates.

Contact us to hear more
kbm@bookboon.com

bp CREDIT SUISSE DAIMLER Unilever Microsoft bookboon.com

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

Click on the ad to read more

When you are aware of your own status and are able to match it to the circumstances, you make your opposite number feel relaxed, which is a good basis for making initial contact and taking a relationship further.

If you have found the courage to work on your own status, it might be a good idea either to study for yourself – or perhaps to ask a friend or a close colleague to observe and tell you about – your behaviour patterns when you are at a reception, a conference, or in other situations where it is important to be inquisitive and outgoing.

You can help each other a great deal in these situations by being honest and saying what you really see.

There is usually a difference between the way you perceive yourself and the way those around you assess you.

On my courses I often see participants falling into three main groups:

- The first group see themselves as outgoing and inquisitive, while those around them see them as somewhat reserved and passive.
- The second group see themselves as low-status people with little opportunity to assert themselves within a gathering. Those around them see that the individuals concerned may be adopting low-status attitudes, but also that they often have potential which could easily be brought into play.
- The third group don't know where they are in terms of their status, and have little sense of how other people see them.

Only rarely do I see people with high status on my courses: they don't see that they have a problem.

On the other hand, I see many participants who find themselves at the foot of the mountain and see it as hard to climb.

But regardless of how you see yourself, it is important to be open and to hear how well-intentioned participants or colleagues perceive you, because that can be the basis for a self-improvement campaign that could have a very positive impact on your future.

The basic issue when working with the status concept is to increase your awareness of different patterns of behaviour. Next comes practice in interpreting other people so that you can understand their patterns of response. The aim is to be able to adapt your status, and in that way to achieve a harmonious effect and interaction.

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

10.2 Eye contact, smiles, and praise confer status

A situation in which status can be tricky but you can quickly achieve a positive result is when you find the courage to make a positive eye contact. Eye contact confers status, because we connect it to openness, honesty, and courtesy. People who have the courage to send these kinds of signals seem strong. If you cannot look others in the eye, you have to struggle to get on the same wavelength as your conversational partners. That is why it is important to practise finding this courage.

You don't have to just stare. Focus on a spot between your conversational partner's eyes. Then it won't seem intrusive; just look away a few times. It can also be helpful to step away from the partner – just six inches will create a lot of room and make the situation more comfortable.

Smile and you will get a smile back. This may sound like a cliché, but it is actually true, because you activate a smiling reflex. Try offering a smile, and see what comes back!

In our part of the world, the smile is a well-documented shared code that attracts new people, creates positive reactions, and signals courtesy. Those around you will automatically assign you some positive qualities.

Poul Ekman is a psychologist and an expert in how to use and interpret lines in the face. He explains that we activate the autonomous nerve system when we smile, which releases sedative endorphins in the body. So there is a good reason why we feel better and why other people are attracted to us when we smile with our whole body.

In a number of cultures it is not usual to express praise of one another. But how do you feel when others praise you? Normally you feel happy and relaxed. But your own estimation of the person who praises you will also be strengthened. Suddenly, you assign that person more importance – a higher status. If you praise others, this will raise your own status.

Of course, the praise must be sincere and relevant, or else it won't work. Quite the reverse, in fact.

10.3 We empower those who can handle power

If we look at two leaders, Anders Fogh Rasmussen, NATO Secretary-General, and Barack Obama, President of the USA, you'll see some definite common characteristics in their status attitudes.

Anders Fogh Rasmussen, former Danish Prime Minister and currently Secretary-General of NATO, has evidently learned about the body's ways of expression. In consequence, he rarely signals weakness. Even under pressure he uses his posture, body language, and intimacy to show strength and status.

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

He does not make the mistake of speaking faster or in abstractions when he faces trouble but, on the whole, he maintains the same rhythm. If he is hard-pressed, you rather see the opposite effect: he takes breaks, and emphasizes his messages more clearly. A typical high-status signal: you don't get nervous, but retain a sense of perspective; you are in control of your movements, and manage both your own reactions and the situation itself.

Whether or not you admire Anders Fogh Rasmussen, it is significant that a leader can infuse his body language with determination and strength. This results in confidence on the part of the audience.

In a very short period, **Barack Obama** has succeeded in turning Europeans and a large proportion of Americans into fans. We don't actually know that much about his policy or his stance on Europe, for instance, but he has gained our empathy. And why do we let empathy draw our attention away from policies? Barack has the same straight posture as Bill Clinton. He is very consistent in his body language, which is open, controlled, and quiet.

Obama is very much in control of his facial expressions; he smiles a lot, and he can also handle looking serious. He surprises his audience when that is appropriate. Sometimes he uses humour and a measure of self-deprecation. But Obama exudes dignity, commitment, and credibility, and you want to be his friend.

Turning a challenge into a learning curve.
Just another day at the office for a high performer.

Accenture Boot Camp – your toughest test yet

Choose Accenture for a career where the variety of opportunities and challenges allows you to make a difference every day. A place where you can develop your potential and grow professionally, working alongside talented colleagues. The only place where you can learn from our unrivalled experience, while helping our global clients achieve high performance. If this is your idea of a typical working day, then Accenture is the place to be.

It all starts at Boot Camp. It's 48 hours that will stimulate your mind and enhance your career prospects. You'll spend time with other students, top Accenture Consultants and special guests. An inspirational two days packed with intellectual challenges and activities designed to let you discover what it really means to be a high performer in business. We can't tell you everything about Boot Camp, but expect a fast-paced, exhilarating and intense learning experience. It could be your toughest test yet, which is exactly what will make it your biggest opportunity.

Find out more and apply online.

Visit accenture.com/bootcamp
• Consulting • Technology • Outsourcing

accenture
High performance. Delivered.

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

Click on the ad to read more

On the whole, Obama is consistent in the status and demeanour he adopts whenever he speaks in public. This is not boring to watch. On the contrary, with his precise manner he fosters rapid and straightforward interpretation of his body language. So we quickly summon the energy to listen to him.

Obama's voice also speaks for itself: a very deep and rich voice signalling calm and energy.

Many women feel extra empathy with Obama, because of the way he frequently praises his wife Michelle Obama.

We are attracted to people who signal energy and use their posture and status attitudes to strengthen their position. The contents of our words will not be activated until we can manage our nonverbal language.

- We are willing to empower and confer influence on a person who appears to have the physical and psychological capacity to handle it.
- Our words alone cannot convince. Our body language and status have to be attuned to the verbal expression for the message to get across.

10.4 Clothes

You can play with your status and dress "up" or "down" depending on what effect you want.

The expression "Fine feathers make fine birds" makes good sense.

I often notice that my clothes are working for me. If my outfit is striking, I am committing myself to be more alert. It can bestow freedom to take courage to do more in a given situation, but it also demands energy from my inner self.

When, for instance, I give a talk, I need to adopt a relatively high status. For this I stimulate and challenge myself by wearing something that "pushes" me a little further on the platform.

I have learned that it is almost impossible to maintain this status, to act with significance, if what I wear doesn't create distance from my everyday garb. For most people, making oneself an interesting person requires clothing that supports that intention.

Thus, it is easier for me to maintain a status as speaker or conference chairman if I wear high heels rather than flat shoes. High heels also mean that I automatically stand up straight to keep my balance, which gives a good posture that itself signals status.

However, it is not a good idea to wear such high heels that they make you uncomfortable, nor to dress in clothes that distract your own attention or totally upstage what you have to say.

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

It is all about striking a balance, which is not really that difficult if you practise noticingg the various reactions elicited by different clothes.

10.5 Being well-dressed confers status

There is no doubt that most women notice and interpret men's clothes, and that they do this more than men do with women.

Well-dressed men signal perspective and that they are in command of the situation. Being well-dressed often engenders respect and trust. But of course the following is also true: if the posture signals a loser's attitude, the overall impression will seem pathetic.

However, a well-fitting suit often gives a man so much confidence that he naturally stands up straight, leading to harmony between clothes, posture, and man.

A tie is a must in times of crisis. It serves to distance the crisis, whereas in easy times you can be a little more relaxed.

A good example of how to exploit clothes is Silvio Berlusconi. You see him impeccably clothed in Italian designer suits. Shoes, haircut, and accessories are all chosen in accordance with the first-class classical Italian norms of how to be well-dressed.

Silvio Berlusconi is very aware of his image, and among other things has used clothes, shoes, energy of facial expression, and body language to create a basis for his fantastic status and power. Elements as well staged as this have played a part in dissipating, or perhaps completely eliminating, the impression of a politician who might have a hidden agenda.

And that means…

Clothes can be used to push yourself into finding the courage to do something – to confer an external status which might develop into increased confidence and hence a higher status, and beyond that into taking the steps to make contacts.

One thing is sure: you shouldn't underestimate the significance of clothes, both for how you are perceived by those around you and for your own choice of how wide a sphere you see as available to you.

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

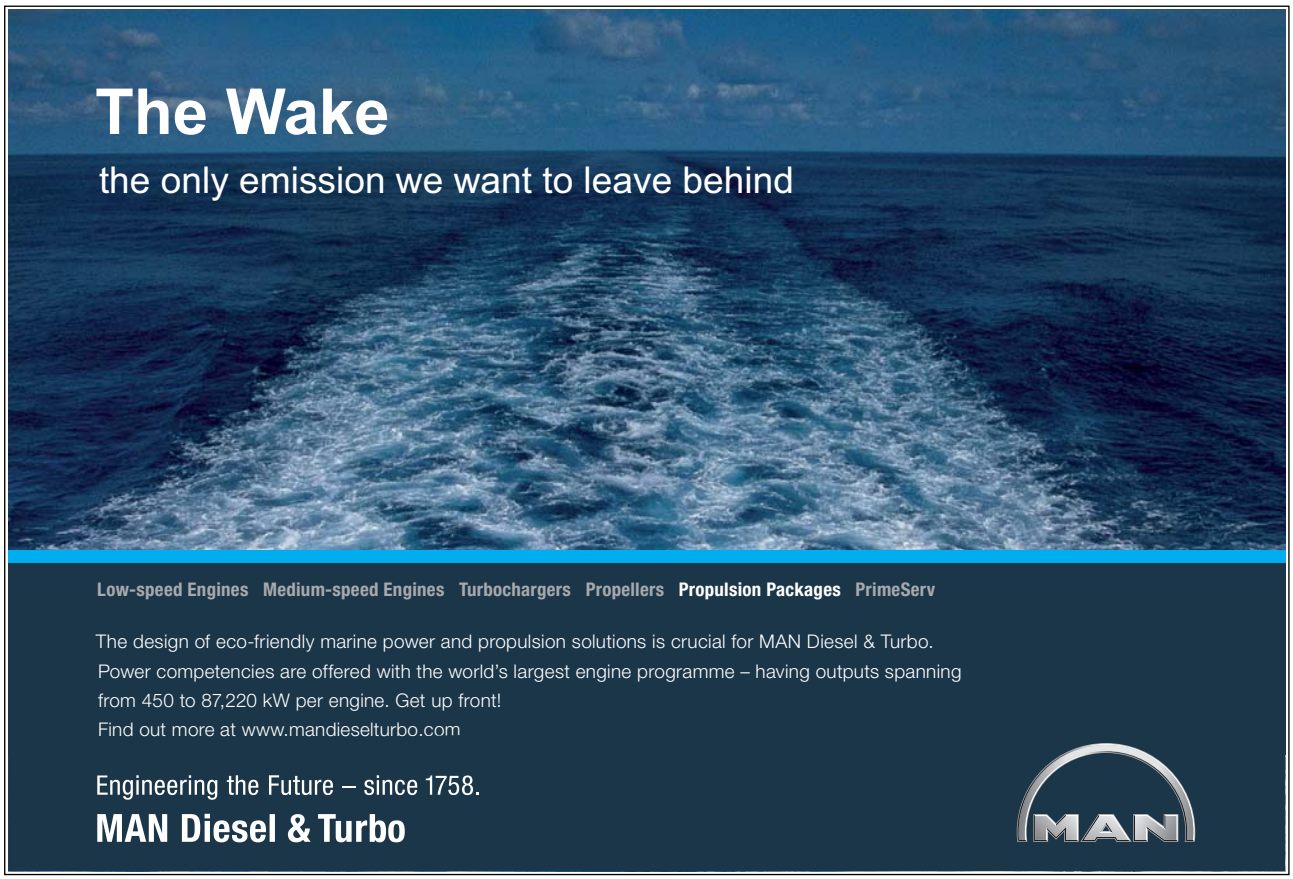
10.6 Business cards also confer status

Have you tried making contact with a person at a networking meeting when you found that person's expertise and story interesting, possibly even fascinating? You exchange business cards, and you receive a thin, homemade, perhaps even home-printed business card. What do you think? Can you maintain your first impression of the person – or does something fall apart?

All interest can be dissipated because you signal stinginess and low status.

For only a minimal investment you can have a business card which signals that you are capable of filling the role which you believe and say is right for you.

Think about these products – business cards, web home page, brochures, etc. – that you distribute, because they say something about you. Get materials that you are proud of – then it is easier to give them away, when you meet people with whom you want a good relationship.


The Wake
the only emission we want to leave behind
Low-speed Engines Medium-speed Engines Turbochargers Propellers Propulsion Packages PrimeServ
The design of eco-friendly marine power and propulsion solutions is crucial for MAN Diesel & Turbo.
Power competencies are offered with the world's largest engine programme – having outputs spanning
from 450 to 87,220 kW per engine. Get up front!
Find out more at www.mandieselturbo.com
Engineering the Future – since 1758.
MAN Diesel & Turbo
MAN

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

Click on the ad to read more

11 Small talk

- A concept with built-in low status

The term "small talk" can be translated "conversation without any deeper substance". In the least flattering meaning of the concept, it can be described as something superficial – empty talk. No wonder many people distance themselves from the concept, and feel negatively branded if they are accused of engaging in small talk.

The concept is characterized by low status: a well-educated man would be surprised, for instance, if you told him that he was good at small talk.

However, the strange thing about small talk is that we use it despite that low status: it is the foundation of many people's everyday welfare, both in private life and in their careers.

We often fail to realize that we are using small talk when we create a good atmosphere at the start of a meeting by asking a colleague if the morning traffic was slow, or when we ask a colleague about his health, or smile at the checkout operator in the local supermarket.

Small talk is a technique of talking, a way to make contact with people, and the glue that creates and maintains contact with friends, colleagues, and business partners.

When you use and refine the things you say in the small-talk category, you realize that the technique is a very useful and effective tool for the task of extending your networks.

When you use small talk constructively alongside consciously-managed body language, you can make everyday life easier and more success-oriented.

11.1 The anatomy of small talk

Why is it so important to be able to master the small talk genre? Because it is the start of every good contact and relationship, and a constructive opportunity for creating a good rapport with the people we want to communicate with.

When we make a new acquaintance, we activate a structure of interests and communication.

The beginning is the point where a contact either succeeds or comes to nothing. If there is interest on both sides, the road is open for moving towards worthwhile communication.

If there is no interest in deeper conversation or in initial small talk, you can withdraw from the conversation without a feeling of being humiliated or having in any way failed or been hurt.

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

Thus, the use of small talk can be as an invitation to a deeper conversation, but it can also be a tool protecting us from failure if we cannot find anything interesting to talk to someone else about.

Small talk gives us space to see the potential in a conversation, and at the same time gives us the opportunity either to accept or to decline a relationship.

11.2 Small talk – the beginning of a good relationship

if you want to make new contacts, you have to set up a temporary platform which allows time for interpreting body language and subsequent evaluation of the conversational partner's potential. Small talk is essential for these opening moves, which are of vital importance in determining whether a new contact comes off or falls through.

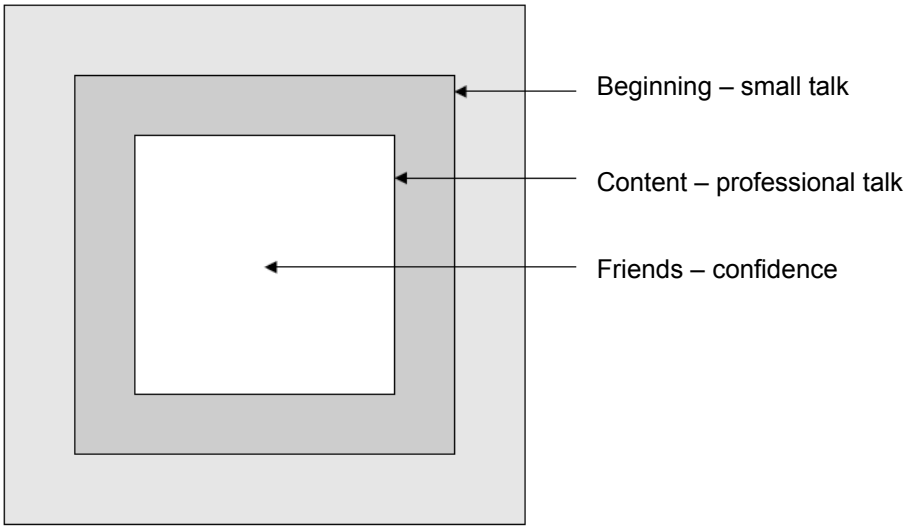
For sceptics who regard managing informal talk as a waste of time or too difficult, it can be good to look on small talk as a function of entry or change with an essential inherent process of clarification.

If you remain sceptical about small talk, you should understand that while you personally may not have any need for this preliminary, your conversational partner very likely would appreciate it. Since it is your job to play your part in creating a good atmosphere, the situation requires you to be very aware of the need to avoid violating your partner's boundaries with respect to how rapidly you can make progress.

A good communication process is based on three stages, and its starting point lies in small talk.

Communication intensity

Good communication falls into stages:



The anatomy of conversation has three stages of communication, with small talk as the first stage.

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

- At the small-talk stage you aim to create a good atmosphere for the person you want to make contact with. It is all about being precise in your communication through your body language and your voice, and leading the potential conversational partner to want to progress to the next stage.
- If you reach the second stage, you are probably talking in professional terms or talking about a common reference topic. Most people feel comfortable in this domain. You have found something in common, and you are committed to a real conversation with substance.
- The highest stage is intense and personal conversation. Here we talk to each other as good colleagues, friends, and close family.

It is difficult to say how long you have to engage in small talk before moving from the first to the second stage. But the more the harmony between physical and verbal expression, the sooner your opposite number will reach an appreciation of who you are and what your aims are – which will give access to professional, worthwhile conversation.

Experience shows that you can train yourself to recognize whether there is any interest in further contact or whether there is no immediate basis for progress.

In the latter case, take care to exit from the situation gracefully. You never know whether the contact might not be revived some time.

Brain power
By 2020, wind could provide one-tenth of our planet's electricity needs. Already today, SKF's innovative know-how is crucial to running a large proportion of the world's wind turbines.
Up to 25 % of the generating costs relate to maintenance. These can be reduced dramatically thanks to our systems for on-line condition monitoring and automatic lubrication. We help make it more economical to create cleaner, cheaper energy out of thin air.
By sharing our experience, expertise, and creativity, industries can boost performance beyond expectations.
Therefore we need the best employees who can meet this challenge!
The Power of Knowledge Engineering
Plug into The Power of Knowledge Engineering.
Visit us at www.skf.com/knowledge
SKF

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

Click on the ad to read more

When you "phase out" a contact, again you use small talk; that is, say something like "Thanks for the chat", and let your conversational partner see that you feel even this brief meeting was congenial, and that you would be willing to renew the contact another time.

Even if you don't actually feel like renewing the contact, still say goodbye and thank you in a friendly way.

Bear in mind that, this way, your conversational partner will perhaps end up with a better experience of the situation, and might recommend you to someone in his own network. So never break a contact impolitely or by slipping out of the conversation sideways.

The same technique is used in meetings where you have a leading role. Close the meeting with a little small talk. Say "thank you" for the interest the participants have shown, use considerate comments and humorous quotations, and comment on the weather or suchlike.

Just as the opening phase in communication is important, it is also vital to end a meeting in a relaxing way. A dull lecture or an unsuccessful social gathering can be redeemed with a good ending or leavetaking.

11.3 Classic topics

What topics can you bring up in a small talk situation? Many people suppose they need to be special and high-flown, but they couldn't be more wrong.

It is important to remember that your potential conversational partner has his hands full with interpreting your nonverbal language. Here, your voice, eyes, intimacy, body language, and the atmosphere you create mean far more than clever sentences and ideas.

Basically, the situation will be congenial if the topics of small talk are clear and identifiable. In this situation you don't want to challenge your potential conversational partner.

Some safe and evergreen topics:

- What brings you here?
- The weather
- TV programmes and news
- Culture, movies, and books
- Headlines in the media
- The room you are in. Take a look around – there is often "free" inspiration in the surroundings, the occasion, the food, special guests, etc.
- Ask for help!

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

The classic topics are always useful. Even though some of them can seem clichéd, they are effective because there is a common consensus that they are an acceptable and safe topic for opening conversation.

Basically, small talk is all about what we have in common.

If you are in a context where there are shared areas of interest, you can of course make your topics more specific.

11.4 Use open questions

There is general agreement that when initiating contact it is good to ask open questions, i.e. questions you cannot answer with a yes or no, but where the conversational partner needs at least to answer with a whole sentence.

Typical questions to get people talking are "who", "what", and "how".

However, as a conversational partner you may feel as though you are under attack if you are asked a shower of who, what, and how questions. As soon as you have the chance, switch to normal conversational questions, which lead to a more equal conversation.

11.5 Be in the know

It is all about being equipped, being in the know about (for instance) news (domestic and foreign), movies, theatre, and the latest books. If you are in the know about what is happening in society, you can feel relaxed about taking part in a conversation at any time and anywhere. It gives you confidence if you feel that you are able to play your part in discussion about a little of anything.

11.6 Beware of parallel talk

Do you recognize the following situation: you have just got back from a fantastic holiday and you have a mass of experiences you really want to share? You start by talking about the wildlife you saw at close hand. But as soon you have uttered a few sentences, your conversational partner takes over and tells you about his own trip to Kenya. This is called parallel talk: the kind of conversation where one story triggers a different one. The problem with this way of talking is that you never get to the crux of the matter, and it often leaves whoever started the conversation frustrated, because he gets no chance to talk about his own experiences.

So if you want to create a good atmosphere in your initial small talk, then stick to the topic. Listen to whoever is speaking, and ask about his experiences and about the things he tells you. You will be appreciated for it and become a desired conversational partner.

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

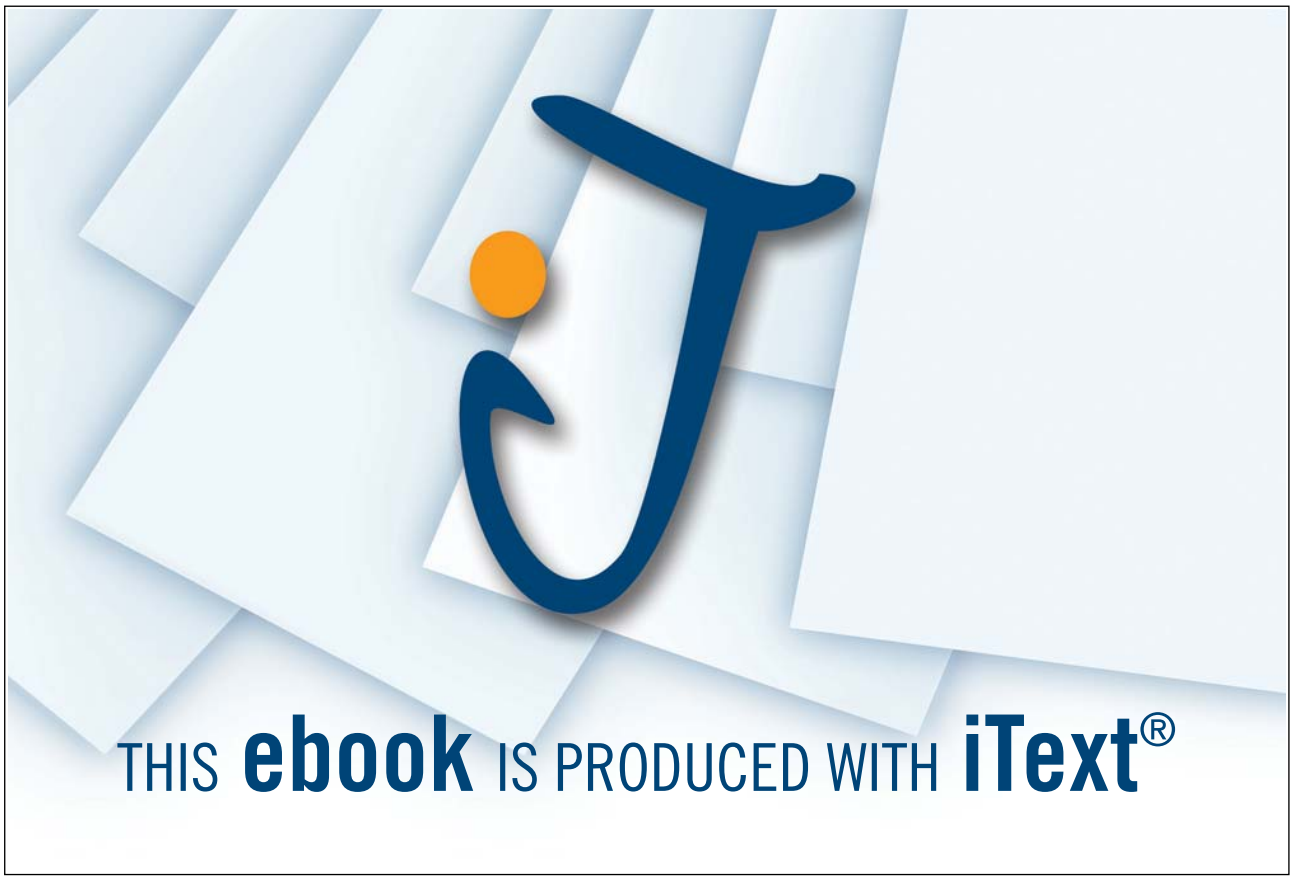
11.7 People good at small talk are good listeners too

It is important for you to be able to take the initiative to generate small talk and get a conversation going. But once talking is under way, it is even more important that you should be able to keep silent and listen. The best way to get your conversational partner to relax is to listen to him.

People who are good at listening in the right way are often very popular in a company. What is the "right way", then? It is when your whole body language shows that you are listening and that you find the conversation very interesting and rewarding. This will often involve asking questions that lead your conversational partner to enlarge on some point from his expertise or his story. People will often be very happy and feel honoured to have you demonstrate real interest in them.

The Danish royal family lead a large part of their public lives in the domain of small talk. Queen Margrethe II is said once to have explained that the way she endured it was by listening with interest and by asking about what was said to her. Exactly that is an essential element in the life of small talk: listening, and asking the speaker relevant questions.

Consider how wonderful it must feel when you have an active listener before you – a person who takes you seriously, and who is not too busy "parallel-talking" or keeping an eye on what else is going on in the room, but who asks you questions about your job and whatever else your conversation is about.



Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

Click on the ad to read more

For most people, being listened to is a luxury that creates good vibes. To be an active listener and to follow up on what is said is therefore a fantastic tool when you engage in small talk.

Small talk is used to make new contacts.

One of the chief aims with small talk is to cause other people to feel relaxed in our company.

Small talk is the ice-breaker that leads to deeper conversation and creates the foundation for co-operation and business relationships.

Use your facial expression and body language to be an active listener.

Minimize "parallel talk".

11.8 The worst mistakes a "small-talker" can make

- Talk too much about himself
- Lecture
- Interrupt
- Ask too many questions
- Ignore his conversational partner's signals
- Progress to a deeper level too soon
- Be too personal

It is important to remember that small talk is all about keeping a conversation going and creating a good atmosphere – not about being showing how clever one is, or jousting with the conversational partner.

11.9 The difficulty of making contact

You may wonder why it is so difficult to make contact with other people – considering that you know full well that it is often beneficial to meet new people and to develop a broader and better network.

The reason we find it trying to make contact with other people is anxiety about being rejected.

We are afraid that our potential partner will not accept the contact the way it was intended.

We fear that the person we have sought out and aim to involve in our destiny will ignore our request, so that we foresee failure or humiliation.

If you cannot recognize the above, then, next time you are in a situation where your common sense shows you the advantages of making contact with someone at a gathering, ask yourself what holds you back. What does hold you back? Why is it so difficult?

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

The answer may be shyness, lack of confidence, or the fact that you don't believe you have anything worth sharing.

Studies show that participating in a gathering and making contact with unknown individuals is a major cause of anxiety.

The *New York Times* has carried out a study on social anxiety. This shows that walking into a room with a lot of strange people is one of the most anxiety-provoking events a human being can experience. No wonder many people feel that they have a mountain to climb when they need to network among people they don't know.

11.10 How to deal with the problem

The most effective way to deal with this anxiety is to look at your own reactions when other people try to make contact with you.

How would you receive a person who plucks up courage and approaches you, for instance, during a break at a course you are attending – with the risk of rejection?

1. Would you think: "What an idiot, why does he come to me?"
2. Or would you think: "How brave and wonderful that the person has chosen to come to me. There must be potential in this person, and therefore I want to welcome him or her."

I think most people would think and act the second way. And if you think that, others would probably act the same way, so that they would be glad for you to take the initiative to make contact.

The logic of this implies that it is the strong people, the heroes and the people with energy, who make contact.

It also shows that the risk of rejection is highly overstated.

Of course it does happen that someone nods a hello, and then turns his back on you. But how often does that happen? And if it happened, in front of various other people, who do you think would be seen as the fool among them? The guy who didn't welcome a well-meaning invitation to contact, of course!

That is why there is everything to gain by being the one who makes contact, the active one. But then don't forget to make things easy and comfortable for people who pluck up their courage and seek you out. Be an active and open player if another person shows his courage and approaches you.

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

You can use two golden sentences to spur yourself on when you are among people who would be interesting to network with:

1. The risk is low, and the opportunities many.
2. I would be happy to be approached – other people will probably also be happy to be approached by me!

If you can't immediately get rid of rejection anxiety, there may be underlying reasons for that.

The same rejection anxiety might also be seen as stemming from excessive self-centredness. If you can get hurt and provoked by anxiety about something that might never have happened and perhaps never will happen, this could indicate that you are paying excessive attention to yourself.

If deep down you can recognize just a little of this logic, it might be helpful to try to forget yourself in the situation and focus more on those around you.

In getting rid of this unnecessary anxiety and self-regard, you will meet a positive reaction from those around you, because attention to other people is almost always reciprocated by attention to you.

It is important to get over rejection anxiety, as it is an exaggerated burden which unnecessarily constrains many business people's ambition to be good networkers.

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

12 Culture

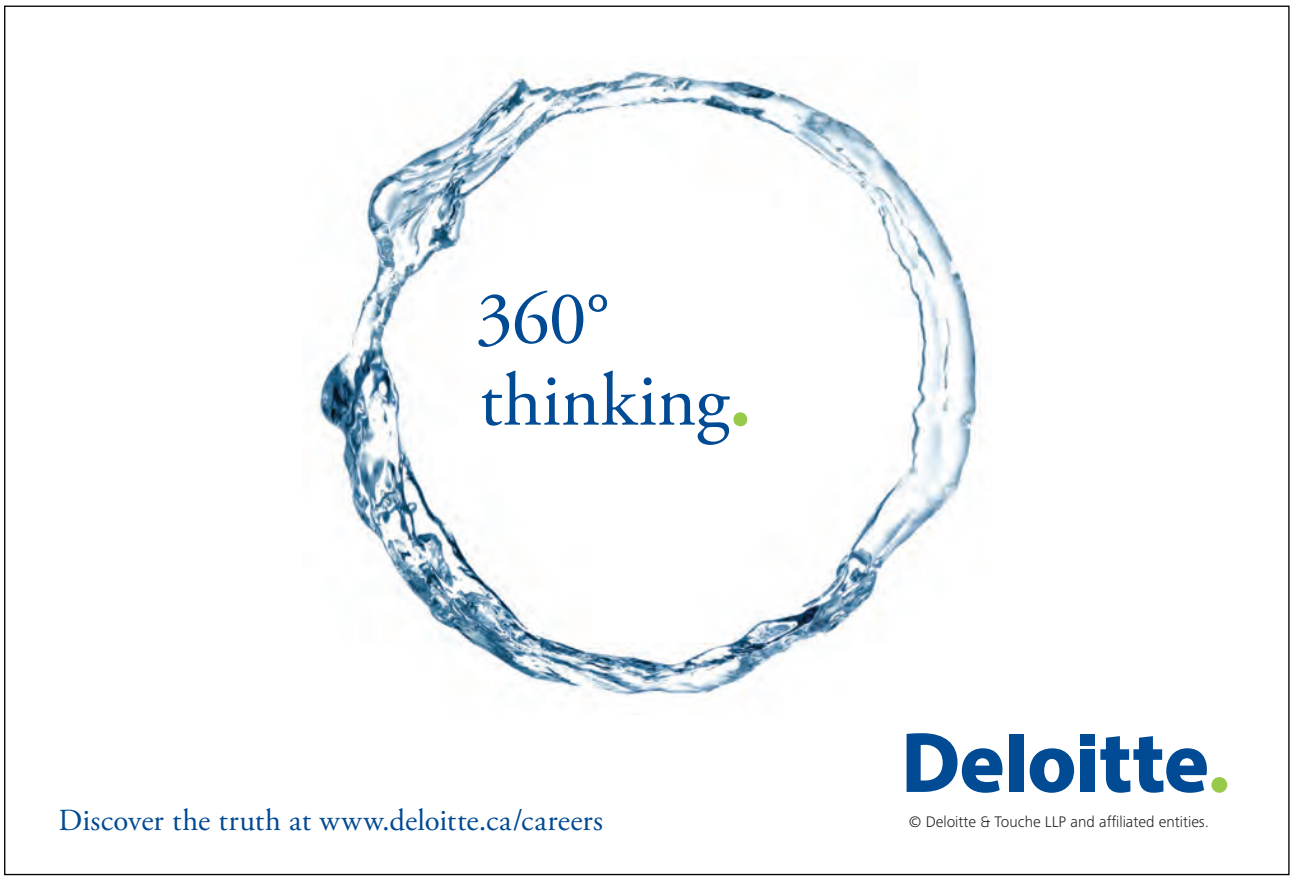
It ought to be plain sailing.

What happens when we enter a gathering? Straight away we scan the crowd for people we know. If you find one or more people you know, you breathe a sigh of relief and immediately make your way to a place where you feel safe. If you don't know anyone in the gathering, you blush and feel at your wits' end.

In these situations we are often aware that we are being observed by others who are interpreting our movements and actions, or rather, our insecurity and confusion, and this doesn't make the entry any easier.

But why can't we just naturally step into a room and be happy that there are so many new people who might represent new and exciting potential for our life and our business?

The reason, as mentioned in the previous chapter, is that we fear rejection.



Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

Click on the ad to read more

And further reasons may lie hidden in our culture:

- we are not brought up to be curious about other people
- we don't welcome others into our circle
- we don't make introductions
- we don't circulate

12.1 What is practice and what can we learn?

In many countries, it is not usual to be inquisitive about other people. That may be because ever since childhood many of us have been taught that you wait to be spoken to. It isn't polite to interrupt or to rush in.

The consequence could be that most of us won't put ourselves out or feel any obligation to be the dynamic one.

If you consider the issue objectively, though, you could claim with justice that it is bad practice *not* to be active and to take the initiative to make contact. If you want a party to go well, everyone has to contribute, and the same applies when you foster a network.

In principle, every participant in a gathering is responsible for communication succeeding – both for themselves and for those around them.

12.2 Group formation

Most of us probably know by experience that it is hard to become part of a group when you are on your own in a gathering. But many people also know the feeling of security when you have got together with close colleagues or friends. It is amusing and congenial, and you don't have to look as if you are searching for contacts or appear to be busy.

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

Life outside a group is not funny. (Drawing: Julius)

MSM
MAASTRICHT SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT
Increase your impact with MSM Executive Education
For almost 60 years Maastricht School of Management has been enhancing the management capacity of professionals and organizations around the world through state-of-the-art management education.
Our broad range of Open Enrollment Executive Programs offers you a unique interactive, stimulating and multicultural learning experience.
Be prepared for tomorrow's management challenges and apply today.
For more information, visit www.msm.nl or contact us at +31 43 38 70 808 or via admissions@msm.nl
the globally networked management school

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

Click on the ad to read more

In countries like England and America, you often see a positive approach to admitting people to a group. If someone is standing outside a group, the group often opens for him. You will be invited in via an open question, or one or more in the group makes a slight move towards the person who is standing alone. All things considered, there is great openness and care to ensure that everyone feels comfortable.

Typically you will see the host and his or her group watching and listening to everything going on within the gathering, in order to make sure that all participants have a relevant person to talk to. This supervision is very discreet, and it is a great comfort because you know that you will only rarely be on your own when attending a conference or reception.

In cultures where there is generally high awareness about everyone feeling a part of a group, people also have a clear understanding of how new people are new business opportunities, and that one favour deserves another.

To make contact, to help another person join your group, is a favour which shows that you have perspective and personal energy. Furthermore, it is implicit that if you have done me a favour, I will probably do you a favour on some other occasion.

12.3 From minus to plus

The model in which groups are surrounded by an invisible wall makes life comfortable for those inside the wall. But if you become known for opting to make connections only with established colleagues and acquaintances, you will not develop new contacts and networks, and you will thereby prevent yourself from updating and future-proofing your networks.

Outside the established groups you see the lone wolves who are trying to find a place where they won't feel completely lost. Typically, these people disappear when the opportunity arises, because they obviously don't feel comfortable. They don't get – or, won't create for themselves – a chance to integrate into the community. That is why it is all about having the courage to use your knowledge and turn a minus into a plus.

12.4 Set goals for your staff

Many business leaders and staff devote considerable funds and money to attendance at courses, conferences, and receptions, without requiring this investment to return specific benefits to the company in terms of new contacts and connections.

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

So it can be well worth while to establish an expectation that when you or a member of your staff attend a reception or spend a day at a conference or course, this should normally result in at least one new constructive contact for the company.

If you are a student or an entrepreneur, the challenge is to find the ability to push yourself into the ring, to recognize the advantage of being active – and to adopt a specific target for how many contacts you need to establish before you get to go home.

The funny thing about setting up these challenges is that they become a sport, so that you invite or encourage individuals to exceed the usual limits of what they ordinarily have the courage to do.

The challenge also forces you to be inquisitive and put questions to the other participants in the gathering.

12.5 Make introductions

At one time, while I was studying English culture, I lived with a family in London. Shortly after my arrival, they kindly invited me into the town for a social occasion. I wasn't that keen, because I didn't know anyone in London and I foresaw a night standing on my own in the corner.

But I was in for a pleasant surprise. Already at that first party, I witnessed the operation of an effective networking system which benefited everyone.

Immediately I entered the gathering, the hosts were aware of my arrival. They came up to me and asked animatedly how my life in London was, what I was studying, and what interests I had.

Later I discovered that they used this information in order to link me up with some of the other guests who had similar interests or qualifications.

After the hosts got through their duty talk, as I took it to be, they wished me an enjoyable evening with their other guests.

I had just taken a glass of champagne when I was addressed by a very well-dressed middle-aged man. This respectable gentleman was a professor of language and communication, and began by asking what I expected from my studies in London.

After a very inspiring discussion, he gave me his business card and told me I was welcome at his university.

Before I had a chance to say thank you, I was picked up by a group of French students who had heard that I came from Denmark. They knew a "charity club" where wealthy Englishwomen spent an afternoon a week conversing with foreign women. I took the contact details, and this link with modern, upper-class women was very inspiring and encouraging during my stay in London.

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

On my way out, I met a man who asked if I was the new girl. And yes, I was. Quickly we found out that we had antiques and auctions in common. The arrangement was that he should pick me up the week following and take me to a very special auction on the King's Road.

Yes! I came home – after this reception – with no less than five business cards, and even more arrangements to meet again. It was a euphoric experience, and I felt more than welcome in London.

I gained two really good friendships and several amusing experiences from that evening, apart from the fact that through these contacts and more similar gatherings I acquired a broad and valuable network in England.

It is noteworthy how naturally many Englishmen handle networking. They are excellent at paying each other attention, and it is only rarely that someone ends up on their own or needs to execute the uncomfortable manoeuvre of interrupting a group.

Making introductions is evidently a pervasive pattern of behaviour, and it seems that they saw the inherent advantages in this long ago. There is also a reciprocal understanding: tonight I will introduce an interesting person to you, and then probably you will introduce a relevant person to me some time in the future.

See the light!
The sooner you realize we are right, the sooner your life will get better!

A bit over the top? Yes we know!

We are just that sure that we can make your media activities more effective.

Get "Bookboon's Free Media Advice"
Email kbm@bookboon.com

bp CREDIT SUISSE DAIMLER Unilever Microsoft bookboon.com

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

Click on the ad to read more

Under this system you will often be given hints about common interests, which means that you feel less awkward and probably have more motivation to embark on relevant small talk.

In many countries it isn't that usual to make introductions. Consequently those around you will doubtless look a little surprised when you start to do it. But some people have to be pioneers if there is something which needs to be done for the good of all of us.

Remember to make introductions, and let others introduce you. If it doesn't happen automatically, then ask others to do you that favour. In that way you will help others and you can achieve your own aims.

12.6 Remember to circulate

Another important element in networking technique is the habit of circulating. I had to get used to the idea that my conversational partner would leave me after only ten minutes, just when we had made good contact. He thanked me for the conversation, gave me his business card, and said that he would be in touch, and then he wanted to circulate. My first thought was "am I boring him?" But no, it is all about using the opportunities of networking.

The technique is: if you want to talk further with your conversational partner, then make an arrangement. There is no reason to use networking time for talk that would be better left to a later meeting. Be sure to make a definite arrangement – a day and time when you will call each other, or meet again.

Experience shows that the next meeting or phone call ought preferably to take place no later than eight days after you first met.

If you are given a business card by your conversational partner, then jot a few words on the back. That helps your memory significantly after you arrive home with ten business cards.

This strategy gives you the opportunity to contact the person again and perhaps examine the possibility of a relationship that could be beneficial to him or you. For a second contact, offer something concrete – a meeting, a cup of coffee, a dinner, or an offer. This will make it easier to call him back and easier for the other person to relate to the contact.

You will also meet some people where you see no potential, either in terms of helping that person or benefiting from the contact yourself. Often you just want to get out of the conversation and move on. But get used to always saying "thank you for the chat" before you pass on. You never know whether your conversational partner may have experienced the situation differently, and might perhaps recommend you to one of his own networking contacts.

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

Thanks for the chat. Nice to hear about your exciting projects.
- Now I need to make contact with some other people.
- But I'll keep your business card.

You need to get used to the fact that the conversation will end after ten minutes. But if this is explained and done in a nice way, the habit may spread and we will all acquire wider and better networks.

12.7 Someone who knows the art

I know a man who was headhunted for a good job – a job of such calibre that it was mentioned in all the main business magazines. They all made a point of explaining that the man in question had one of the widest and most influential networks in Denmark, and that this was why he landed the job ahead of other candidates.

He is also very effective at receptions, parties, and other networking situations, because he knows how to circulate. He spends no longer than ten to fifteen minutes with one person, listens and talks, and is a hundred per cent intensely present, and then he says thank you for the conversation and moves on. He plans in advance which people he wants to talk to and what they will talk about. At the same time there is also space for unplanned encounters, if other interesting people turn up on a particular occasion.

You can tell that people feel comfortable in his company, and they don't like letting him go. However, he elegantly talks himself out of the conversation – so that everyone looks happy after their encounter.

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

He only rarely eats and drinks at these occasions. To him, these are business hours, and the time needs to be used optimally. His behaviour has been a major source of inspiration for me, for one thing because I can see him as an ideal combination of both networker and netweaver – being human and being effective at the same time.

12.8 Create a good atmosphere!

If you think of a networking situation where you felt comfortable, it is guaranteed that this connects to the feeling of receiving attention. It is pleasing to feel that one is noticed, heard, and respected. And if you like that, undoubtedly other people like it too. A master in this technique, of paying attention to others, is the German Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel.

From being almost a little grey mouse, she has developed into Europe's darling. And what is it she is able to do? She gives her partners something they enjoy: attention.

Suddenly, the big men in Europe feel that they are heard, noticed, and respected, and they are willing to reach various agreements in order to continue in this situation. The outcome for Angela Merkel is that, because everyone is so excited about her, she achieves her agenda with relative ease.

I WANT TO CHANGE DIRECTION,
AND THE WORLD.
GOT-THE-ENERGY-TO-LEAD.COM
We believe that energy suppliers should be renewable, too. We are therefore looking for enthusiastic new colleagues with plenty of ideas who want to join RWE in changing the world. Visit us online to find out what we are offering and how we are working together to ensure the energy of the future.
RWE
The energy to lead

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

Click on the ad to read more

12. 9 Where is the curiosity?

Another noticeable thing about many people is their obvious lack of curiosity about one another. We don't ask one another all that much and this may be interpreted (perhaps mistakenly) as lack of interest in what is going on right in front of us.

I often watch my participants when we start a course. Some enter the room, mumble a "good morning", take a seat, and start turning over their pages. A few enter the room and begin asking the other participants about themselves: where do you come from, what do you do, why are you here, and so forth.

If you observe American social conventions, you often see enormous inquisitiveness and curiosity. This means that you quickly feel comfortable, and that you get to know the people you meet. Maybe acquaintanceships are superficial – but so what?

I have often felt comfortable with Americans, even after just a few hours' acquaintance. Infected by their curiosity, I have begun talking and getting onto the wavelength of new people in record time. They have taught me something, I have taught them something. They know me, I know them. They can recommend me, I can recommend them, and on top of that, we were relaxed in each other's company.

> If we started acting more openly and inquisitively towards each other, life would be easier and more congenial for most of us. We would develop networks which would reach out and touch other networks, and the total power that would be working for us and our businesses would be massive.

12.10 Find role models

When the opportunity arises, try to discover people who have an aura of popularity around them. You will see that by far the majority of them will *not* place themselves at the centre but, on the contrary, they will place others at the centre.

Another characteristic of these people is that they are often good at praising and complementing each other. Not praising just for the sake of praising, but expressing relevant praise – the kind that makes your conversational partner feel accepted and part of the group. In return it gives you status and confidence.

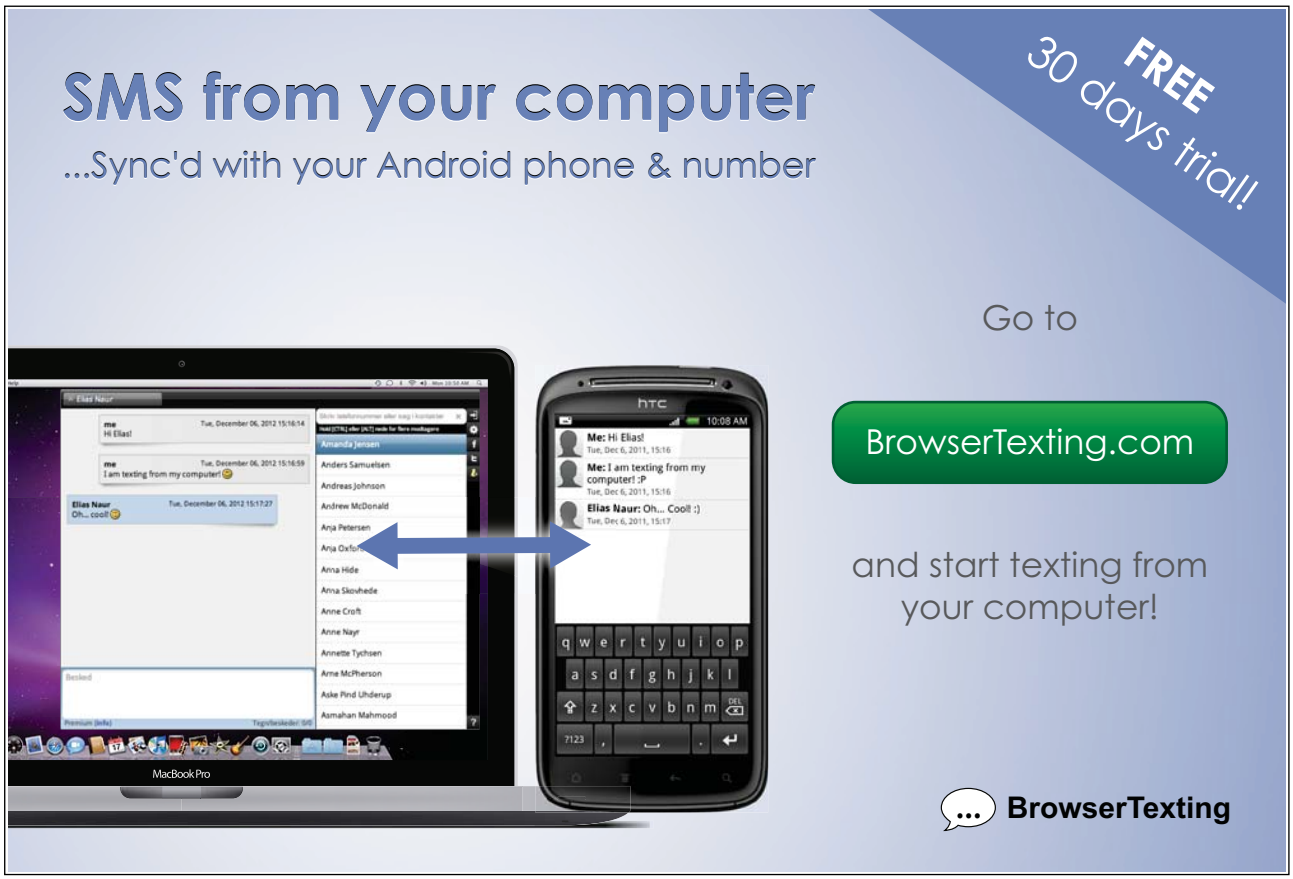
I can only suggest that you find a couple of people who you feel have the ability to make contacts effectively – and who you think are good counterparts to you. If you are in a position to contact them personally, then do that. Tell them about your task. I guarantee that they will be flattered – and it will lead them to offer you their best advice.

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

The guru Anthony Robbins once said at one of his big sessions: Seek knowledge from the very best. In twenty minutes you get the essence of a whole lifes experience.

If you cannot make personal contact with your role models, then monitor their behaviour and adapt what you find relevant.

No matter which method you use, or if you come across exotic networking cultures and adopt some "exotic" tools, with these tools you will quickly find yourself broadening your networks with many relevant new business relationships.



Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

Click on the ad to read more

13 Ten good pieces of advice

1. Remember always to carry your business cards – which should include all relevant details. A photo on the business card makes it easier to call a person to mind, if you want to contact them later.
2. You will not build a network by sitting in your office and making phone calls. You have to be physically present at receptions, conferences, trade fairs, networking meetings, courses, etc. It happens in the field.
3. Obsession with the idea that "networking" is boring and filled with failure needs to be transformed into something positive: you have to go out and meet new people, who for sure will be able to contribute one way or another to your life and your business. Think about the fact that good networks represent power and influence.
4. Your body language signals something about your state of mind, your comfort, and your energy levels. Always be the best edition of yourself. Remember that we are attracted by winners and their attitudes. For losers, it's an uphill struggle; so, if necessary, fake it so long as a reception or a conference lasts, in order to achieve optimum return from a networking situation. If you don't have the strength to do that, or if you cannot force yourself to summon up the energy you need, then best stay at home this time.
5. Be active! Make contact, introduce yourself, and have always three opening small-talk questions ready. Examples: What brings you here? Where do you come from? What do you do? Be a good listener, follow up with questions, and stay on topic. Seek out common interests or passions. This encourages the possibility of further conversation, and makes it easier to remember people subsequently.
6. Be good at circulating, so you can talk to lots of people. Remember to close by handing over your card and making an arrangement about when you will be in contact again. If you do not arrange a contact, then phone or e-mail no later than the following week. In such a situation, offer something concrete – a meeting, lunch, or an offer. This makes it easier to phone, and easier for the other party to relate to the contact.
7. Use small talk to create a good atmosphere, so that other people relax and you will be relaxed yourself. Be aware of those around you – praise them, talk to them, and let them feel accepted and welcome. If you are a man: be polite, it pays off. For the women it is all about receiving attention and showing happiness when you get it.
8. When we go out to meet new people, we Danes prefer to contact people we already know or who seem similar to ourselves. And that is fine, if we are just out to have fun; but, if it is about business, it is important to move out of our comfort zone and instead be aware of people who can enrich us with new and different opportunities, approaches, and perspectives.

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

9. Choose relevant networks and also individuals in the swim who might benefit your business. Well-known, admired people are not necessarily difficult to get in contact with. A determined effort based on serious preparation might help by making the contact more relevant for that person, and also by dissipating your own nervousness.

   Go for gold! No one thanks you for not doing it!

   Remember that good networking is also about sharing your own knowledge. What you share will usually be reciprocated.

10. Give yourself and your staff a goal every time you devote a few hours to a reception, a day to a conference, or a week to a course. These networking opportunities should result in at least one new contact for your company – preferably more. By setting this as a goal, you will escape your ego-centredness, and you will turn seeking new contacts into a professional activity. That way, networking can become a sport where the challenge is to do ever better.
11. Make networking a work discipline. Find role models, or be someone who leads the way and shows how to choose good networks and how to act within them.
    Set criteria for what networking activity should contribute to your company. Prioritize the function and show that it is valued; offer attention to those staff who take this function seriously, and reward them.

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

14 The road to success

Preparation – to become a good networker.

In general

- Practice engaging in small talk! Make contact with, and create a good atmosphere around, all the people you can make contact with. Make contact with the parking attendant, your colleague, the director, your competitor, and so on. Over time, practice makes communication easy.
- Practise entering a gathering, and decide how you want other people to see you.
- Prepare and rehearse your introduction – remember it must be relevant and short!
- Keep informed about news, politics, music, and current headlines – it increases your confidence if you are able to talk about a little of everything.

Before you get there

- Decide whether the occasion you are visiting is just for fun or is something you can gain from.
- Have three small-talk questions prepared – together with a good closing remark. Set goals for how many and which contacts you want to make.
- Remember business cards, paper, and pen, so you can make a note of information that might crop up.

At conferences, courses, receptions, fairs, etc.

- Take a chance – dare something – don't wait to be approached
- Be aware of what your body language and your facial expression signal
- Look for eye contact, introduce yourself briefly, and ask who, what, and how questions
- Listen, listen, listen, and follow up with questions. Seek common interests or passions.
- Use compliments and create a good atmosphere
- Make use of other people to help you reach your target
- Make introductions
- Remember to circulate
- Present the best version of yourself

After the meeting – evaluate!

- Did you achieve your aims?
- What would you do differently next time?
- Give yourself credit for whatever went well.

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

15 Exercises

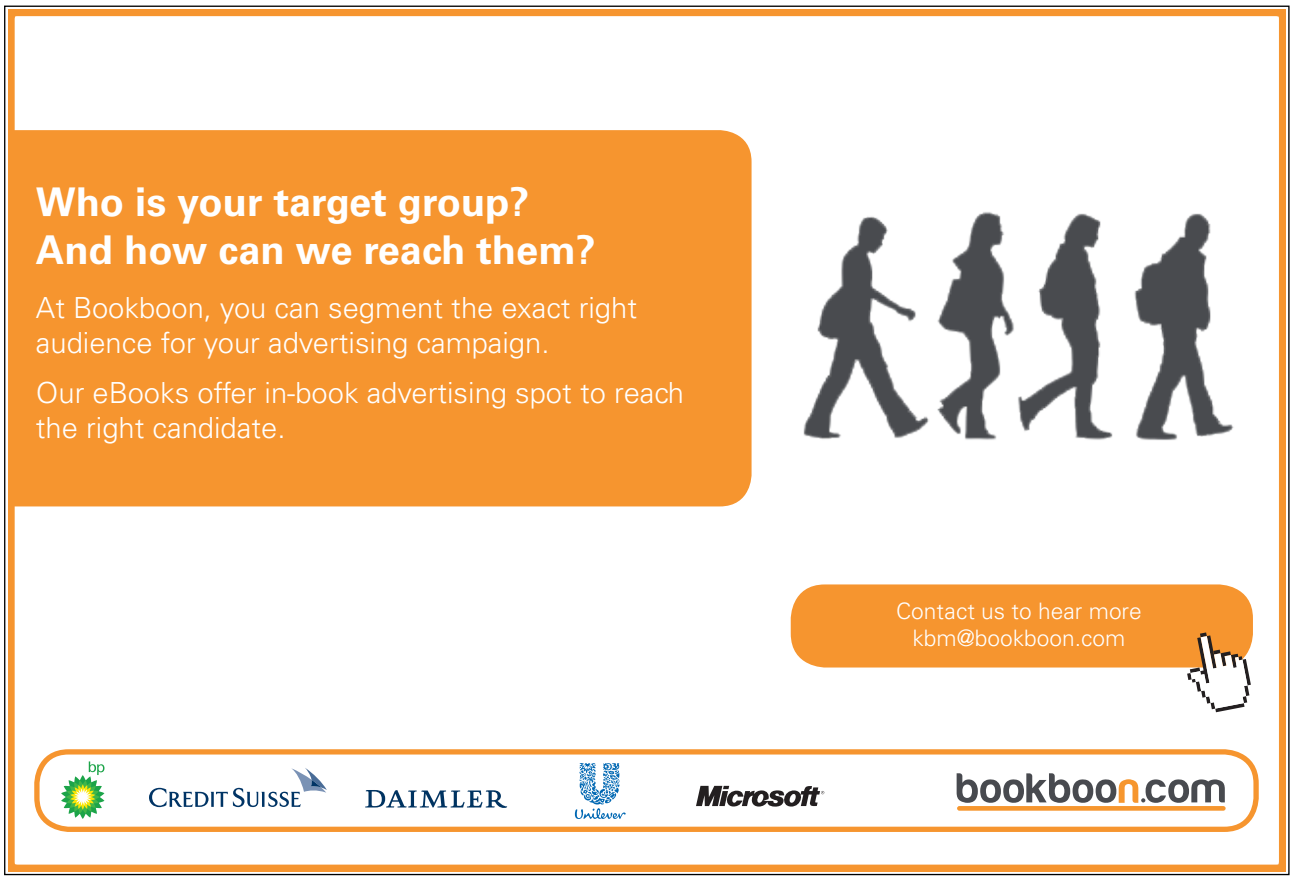
Practice being a professional and popular networker

Few people think much about how they act and what they really gain from networking meetings. If you don't have a clear understanding of how effective you are in general, and if you feel like working a little deeper on your behaviour and your qualifications as a networker, the three following exercises are good.

First exercise: analyse your current performance!

In this exercise you will recall the last reception or networking situation you attended, and answer some questions about it in writing. Nobody else needs to see what you write, so you can be honest with yourself.

1. What did you prepare or think through before you arrived at the reception?
2. How did you enter the room and what impression did you have of yourself?
3. Did you approach people or did they come to you?
4. Did you make contact with the people you wanted to meet?
5. Did you enable other people to make contacts and progress?
6. How did you come away from the meeting?


Who is your target group?
And how can we reach them?
At Bookboon, you can segment the exact right audience for your advertising campaign.
Our eBooks offer in-book advertising spot to reach the right candidate.
Contact us to hear more
kbm@bookboon.com
bp
CREDIT SUISSE
DAIMLER
Unilever
Microsoft
bookboon.com

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

Click on the ad to read more

You can work with the topics separately or deal with them in a single document. You might also discuss your behaviour patterns with a friend or colleague. As said earlier, there is often a difference between how we see a situation ourselves and how others perceive us.

You can find tools and inspiration relevant to the different questions in this book.

Second exercise: rehearse!

For your next networking meeting, you could use the following questions to plan your behaviour and your goals.

1. How should you prepare yourself for the meeting?
2. How can you identify the best thing about yourself?
3. How should you enter the room?
4. How do you make eye contact?
5. Who would someone worthwhile for you to contact?
6. Are there attendees you can help with your "know-how" or by introducing them to others?

Third exercise: chart your network!

Diagramming your existing networks can be an eye-opening exercise. Try to chart the networks you are involved in today. When you first try this, you will find that you are involved in more than you thought.

- What active networks do you have currently?
- What is your vision for the coming year?
- Who can help you to get there?
- Do you have the right networks?

Be aware of areas where you may be over-exposing yourself or have shortcomings relative to your goals. Adjust your networks so that they are oriented towards and support the aims you have for your company, your career, or your education.

It can be hard saying goodbye to relationships that have served you well, but networking can be very time-consuming, and there is not much progress in nostalgia.

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

16 Epilogue

Life as a professional networker is not an idea for the future, but crucial in today's society. Business grows and is arranged via networks, staff can in most cases be recruited through networks, and companies raise capital on the basis of personal contacts – the foundation of which is often acquaintances and recommendations that emerged from networking.

There are networks everywhere, and they are the centre of a great deal of power and influence, both formal and "invisible". So it is important that both as a business person and in your private life you should be able and willing to engage in networking.

Unfortunately, it can be painful to participate and develop relationships within networking environments where the framework is loose and unstructured, so that finding the courage to assert oneself demands a lot from the individual.

My intention with this book is to create a wider understanding of the conditions that we are all working under today, and to offer some tools and strategies to enable you to fulfill this professional role and get to love life as a networker.

Networking is a lifestyle which is all about reciprocity in giving and receiving – and you cannot get started soon enough.

Good luck with your new life as a professional networker.

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

17 Endnotes

1. The business consultant Bob Littell describes this technique in his book *Raising Your R&R Factor.*
2. "Elevator speech": a speech of roughly thirty seconds in which you distil the essence of your mission or company. The speech must be completed within the time it takes to get from one floor to another in an elevator – hence the name.
3. The finding is due to the social psychologist Albert Mehrabian.

Click on the ad to read more